

* CHANGING
MOONS *

William Hunter Birckhead.

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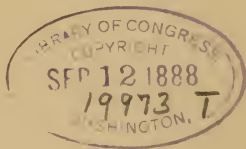
CHANGING MOODS

In Verse and Rhyme.

BY

WM. HUNTER BIRCKHEAD.
"

'Tis not a cultured hand that holds the pen ;
But then, 'tis one that's honest, and means well.
SANTOS.



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Copyright, 1888,
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To my Wife,

AS A SINCERE TRIBUTE TO HER LOVE AND
DEVOTION,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

NEWPORT, R. I.

June, 1888.

PRELUDE.

*Some critic not too great or good,
I humbly pray, may feel in mood
These lines to read ;
For if a high and mighty man
Such untaught lays should chance to scan,
What hope indeed !*

*I cannot claim the poet's fire ;
I could not hold Apollo's lyre ;
I wish I might !
These errant rhymes that taxed my powers
Are but the work of idle hours
Long passed from sight.*

*But if some kindred spirit sees
Within this book a thought to please,
'Tis all I ask.
And now to those who care to read,
I leave, of praise or blame, the meed,
And close my task.*

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¹ *Si* (Fr.), *γάρ* (Gk.), *et* (L.) = Cigarette.



THE DRUMMER-BOY.

AN INCIDENT OF THE WAR OF THE REBELLION.

THE meagre space of the field hospital
Was far beyond its limits taxed that day,
When soldiers fought, when soldiers fell
in fight.

Their wounded comrades other comrades
bore,

Some in their arms, some on rude
stretchers laid.

— A rough board thrown quick across
two fence rails,

Or perchance a piece of battered canvas,
Firm grasped at either end by stalwart
arms,

Was all they had; while some, whose
fate it was

To be less sorely hurt, were e'en content
To totter, by the aid of friendly shoulder,
Their way toward the open tent, apart,
Where ready hands their bleeding wounds
 might stanch.

— And how rough men their roughness
 cast aside,

And gentle as the gentlest woman were
In aid they gave, and even in their
 speech,

It marvels much to tell; but so it was.

And as, in turn, each one received the
 care

Which kindly science sought to give, you
 oft

Might hear, from throats nigh parched
 with loss of blood,

Such words as these: "He's worse than
 I; leave me

And go to him;" or else some one, who
 knew

His span of life was nearly spent, would
 say,

His voice so faint 't was hard to catch
 the sound,

“Why linger with the dead? the living
claim
Your aid;” and thus these noble souls
would vie,
Unconsciously, in deeds of heroism.
— While thus the throng of wounded men
its way
Maintained, a huge backwoodsman, once,
— from Maine —
A soldier now, and sergeant too, for
deeds
Of valor done, pushed his strong path
beyond
The crowd, and struggled for a foremost
place
Around the spot where skilful men es-
sayed
The fight of science against death — and
won
Full oft, when all the odds were not ad-
verse.
In his great arms the giant bore a child,
For so he seemed, albeit a drummer’s coat
Enveloped him, and in his hands he
grasped,

Unconscious, two bits of wood, one
 broken,
And both besmeared with blood. He
 laid the boy
Upon the ground; but first spread out
 his cloak,
To make the place perchance less cold
 and hard.
Then, looking full into the surgeon's face,
As he would probe its utmost truthfulness,
Apart somewhat he drew him from the
 crowd,
And bending low, in whisper choked and
 hoarse :
"Save her life, and God will bless you
 for it;
Guard her honor as a sister's, cast by
 love
Beyond her sphere; for pure she is as
 one
Of God's own angels! No more now."
 Then turned,
His face stern set and hard as if with pain,
And glancing once again within the tent,
As 't were to see if all were well, he sped

Toward the booming of the cannon on
The hill, and soon was lost to sight of
all.

— The battle raged, and men and
brothers fought

In fierce contention, while the daylight
waned

Around them; but as evening fell, some-
what

The noise of conflict ceased, and men
took pause

To breathe. 'Twas then a dying man
was brought,

And laid with tender care within the tent
Which served the hospital to form; and
all

The giant soldier straightway knew,
while he,

In gasping breath and faintly, "Where
is she?"

And then they told him she had died, and
wondered

At the look of joy which came upon his
Weary face; at which he closed his eyes,
and

With a sigh he slept; and so death took
him.

And those around still wondered at his
look,

So peaceful, and of such a great relief.

— They did not know how from his
home, to him

Unknown, that same slight form that he
had borne

So madly through the crush of men and
all

The tumult of the fight had followed
him;

How too, to share his love, she sought
his death

To share, and, cutting off her woman's
hair,

Had donned a drummer's uniform, and
thus

Enlisted as a soldier; and into

Battle too she went with him unbidden,

And strove to keep beside him in the fight;

And thus her fate o'ertook her ere she
knew.

But now she was not left alone, to bear

The brunt of her disclosèd sex, but slept
In death, with him she loved, to part no
 more.

And this he knew; and so, all dread for
 her

Removed, his look grew calm, and then
 —he died.

FRIENDSHIP'S LIKENESS.

Two hands — joined across the line
Separating yours and mine;
'Twixt their lives no shadows fall,
Each one trusting all in all.

Two hearts — tuned to bear alike
Any blow that fate may strike;
Be it gladness, be it pain,
Both together share the strain.

Two minds — keen the thought to trace
In each other's tone and face;
Bearing what a comrade may
In his kindness dare to say.

Two souls — kindred in their aim,
Though they differ, yet the same;
Each one, craving noble ends,
To its fellow, helping lends.

Two lives — striving with their might
To live nearer to the right ;
Seeking, for the other's sake,
Each *his* life more pure to make.

Such as these may dare to claim
All that's meant by Friendship's name, —
Joined in heart and mind and soul,
Single units of one whole.

Free from all self-interest they ;
Free from passion's heated sway ;
Free from bickering and strife, —
Their true love befits their life.

SUNRISE.

Lo ! the day is gently waking
In the cradle of the sun ;
Like a weary sleeper rousing,
When the night's long rest is done.

In the east the sky is lighted
By a dim, uncertain glow ;
And the clouds are tinged with colors
Such as only angels know.

On the earth the mists are creeping
Slowly o'er the distant hills,
While a solemn silence lingers,
Broken by the babbling rills.

One by one the stars are fading
From their places in the sky ;
All their weary watch accomplished,
What have they to do — but die ?

Hark ! the birds and insects piping
 Make their chorus to the morn,
While the lazy breeze goes whispering
 Through the fields of waving corn.

Redder grows the wide horizon, —
 Brighter, in the tinted east,
Crowned with all the glowing radiance
 Of a royal bridal feast.

Slowly comes the lingering monarch
 From his couch of rosy down ;
And the day, in blushing colors,
 Hands to him his golden crown.

Now the birds with louder chirping
 Each one to his mate doth call,
And the myriad sounds of Nature
 Give sweet answer to them all.

Lo ! the mists are fading faster
 In the glow of yellow light,
And the sun, in all his glory,
 Bursts upon our wondering sight.

A STORM—ON THE SEA-COAST.

LOUDLY rolled the echoing thunder,
And the livid lightnings flashed;
While the wind in savage fury
Through the creaking tree-tops crashed.

Mountain-high the waves were surging
In their wild, inhuman glee,
Filling mortal hearts with terror
For the people out at sea.

Harshly screeched the sea-gulls, circling
Wide and wider in their flight;
And all Nature, swayed by passion,
Trembled in the wavering light.

Then a sudden lull, one moment,
While the wind withdrew his breath;
And a murmuring silence, broken
By a crash as fierce as death.

Brighter flashes now the lightning ;
Quicker come the thunder-quakes ;
And the gale, in loosened fury,
With triumphant echoes breaks.

Now the rain pours down in torrents,
And the world is lost in night ;
Given over to the madness
Of the Storm-King's blasting might.

TEARS.

QUICK to come, quick to go,
Easily the tears flow,
When, God's mercy — we are children.

Hard to come, hard to go,
Weary do the tears flow,
When no longer — we are children.

None to come, none to go,
Naught can make the tears flow :
Wrinkled age claims us — God's children.

TO A SWALLOW.

BIRD of our summer sky,
Why dost thou fly so high,
Then, darting down again,
On thy wings wide open,
Seem to coquet with men?
Oh, tell me why!

Say, from what happy home
Hast thou to mortals come?
Was it from tropic clime,
Crowned with the fig and lime,
Od'rous with fragrant thyme,
Saffron and gum?

Or is a colder zone
That which thou fain must own?
Matters it little, though,
Sunshine or arctic snow,
So now thou dost not go,
Leaving us lone.

How wert thou made so bright,
Gliding thy graceful flight,
Cleaving the air in glee,
Freest of all things free,
Breathing wild poesy,
Born of delight?

Motion's divinity
Sure must preside o'er thee.
How every sweeping curve,
Formed by thy buoyant swerve,
Perfect in mould and nerve
Shows thee to be!

Each stroke thy rapid wings
On the soft ether flings,
Limning in unseen lines
What, could we read the signs
Surely would teach our minds
Beautiful things.

What if thy song be slight?
In thy wide-darting flight
Naught can with thee compare;

Painting upon the air
Pictures so bright and fair,
Traced out of light.

How thou dost glide and dart,
Pause and curve, turn and start !
Oh, what bewildering strokes
Thy varying course provokes !
As though thou fain wouldst coax,
Some air-god's heart.

Now, o'er the waving trees,
Racing the summer breeze, —
Then, from thy dizzy height,
Dropping, more swift than light,
Down to the earth, — a mite,
Skimming the leas.

Dost thou e'er kiss the grass ?
So close thou seem'st to pass,
Methink'st thou must indeed,
And e'en the violets heed,
In thy low-flying speed,
Deep as they mass.

Like to no mortal force
Is thy swift-changing course.
Fairy-like motion fair,
Guiding thy way in air,
Holding thee balanced there,
 Never at loss.

Like to a falling star,
Seen through the mists afar;
· Darting to earth alight,
Shot by the arm of night,
Forcing with sudden might
 Heaven's gates ajar.

Like to a gliding sail,
Sped by a favoring gale,
Floating the sea along,
Urged by the currents strong,
Lulled by the mermaid's song,
 Chanting its wail.

Like to a rocket's course
Curving the sky across ;
Tearing the veil of night,

In its wild, wayward flight,
Leaving a trail of light, —
All golden floss.

Like to a startled maid,
Fluttering her wings, afraid,
As in her whispered ear
Love words she first doth hear,
Which, though they sound most dear,
Make her dismayed.

Like to the even way
Such love may hold some day,
When, from all doubt set free,
Glorious its course shall be ;
Strong in its constancy,
Scorning decay.

Happy thy little hour,
O bird of joyous power !
And though thou build a nest
Where all thy loved ones rest,
Yet motion is thy zest,
And grace thy dower.

Long ere the break of day
Upwards thou tak'st thy way,
Hastening the sun to greet,
As from his golden seat
Darkness he bids retreat
'Neath his clear ray.

Then with thy joyous swirl
Quickly thy wings unfurl,
And through the morning's mist
Thou as a vision flitt'st,
Like a bright amethyst
Fronted with pearl.

Men say thou hast no soul,
And that thy earthly goal,
When once thou findest it,
Holds all that Holy Writ
For such as thee deems fit, —
Here is thy whole.

Yet it seems hard to feel
So much of joy and zeal
No other home should know,

Save this poor world below :
Think'st thou this *can* be so,
Without appeal ?

Ah ! then, but come and go,
E'en as the flowers blow,
E'en as the sunshine, too,
And the soft evening dew.
These all are emblems true :
Be thou also !

*A REMONSTRANCE.*¹

I.

IN this sad day, when men write so-called
verse,
That drags more slowly than the fateful
hearse;
When hireling couplets grow from starv-
ing pens
More fast than eggs from stately coop-
fed hens;
When every pale-faced youth, from college
freed,
Deems his slow Muse a Pegasus indeed;
When brainless critics praise, for lucre's
sake,
The vapid maunderings of some moneyed
rake, —

¹ On being asked to review a book of very indifferent verse.

'Tis time, indeed, some other pen than
mine
Should raise the standard for the Sacred
Nine,
And drive from off Parnassus' storied
heights
Such worthless bantlings, with their
pigmy flights.

II.

"Divine afflatus" oft their text includes,
But Folly over all their efforts broods ;
Like hunchbacked mothers, whom the
gods deny,
Their flimsy offspring are but born to
die.
Men would be rhymsters, rhymsters
would be bards ;
And yet, forsooth, the fools must show
their cards,
And prove that all their limnings, though
well daubed,
Are merely copies, from some master
robbed :

Chameleon-like they shine in borrowed
hue,

Their thoughts but parodies, their verse
untrue.

Whate'er their hopes, they merit naught
but scorn ;

The poet is not made — he must be born.

TWO SHADOWS.

I. SUN SHADOWS.

ONE summer's day, without designing,
Two shadows met in the village street,
And danced along its grassy lining
In manner decorous and meet.

High noon was near, and folk were
passing
Upon their errands to and fro ;
And this these sober shadows glancing
Upon the pathway seemed to know.

They moved along with steady motion,
The bright sun shining far between,
And gave to none the slightest notion
Of aught that might not well be seen.

The one seemed taller than the other ;
Nor yet so graceful in its pose.
Perhaps it was the smaller's brother,
Perhaps its cousin — but who knows ?

And so they flitted on demurely,
Far out into the hastening day ;
And left no trace, to tell securely
Their purpose or their destined way.

II. MOON SHADOWS.

The bright full-moon the world was
lighting
With all its soft, enticing glow,
When o'er a hedge, their play inviting,
Two shadows frolicked to and fro.

Far softer were they than those playing
Their hide-and-seek at early noon ;
And yet in some way, there 's no saying,
The air seemed singing the same
tune.

The country lane they shared, unfet-
tered,
No prying footstep lingered near,
And so they deemed it little mattered
How to the moon they might appear.

Their outlines wandered close together
As on the hedge they moved along ;
And something seemed their waists to
tether,
As notes in music join a song.

And then, they moved so slowly onward !
And now and then an upward look
Was covered by another downward ;
And other curious forms they took.

How different were they from the
morning !
And yet the same, I trow, they be ;
For ere the summer's leaves were falling,
Sweet Elsie pledged her troth to me.

TIME'S IMPRESS.

OUR age is not told by the years,
But by something far subtler within ;
By a something, unknown, except to
ourselves, —
Our soul-fight with suffering and sin.

Men seek for the age of the oak,
But vainly they look for time's seal,
Until deep in its heart do they carry
their quest,
When they see what their search
would reveal.

There each decade of life is marked out,
In close-lying circles outlined ;
And its birth is a thing but easily told
When once its heart-secrets we find.

And who is there knows not the truth,
The sad, sad truth we all learn, —

That the gray-turned hair and the feeble
step

And the furrowed brow, each in turn,

Tells a tale of its own to our souls,

Whose words we need not repeat, —

That the years are naught when compared
to the strife

Of a smothered and anguished heart-
beat?

Like the blows of a trip-hammer's weight

As it rises and falls in its course,

As it crushes the metal beneath

With its fierce, invincible force,

So each heart-throb that beats in our
breast,

O'erweighted by sorrow and sin,

Batters down e'en the years of our life

With the impress of things that *have*
been.

Oh, happy the babe at the breast,

And happy the children at play !

Let them joy while they can, in their
innocent glee,
While God's angels keep troubles
away.

SNOW-FLAKES.

OH, who can know where the snow-
flakes go?
Some, indeed, help to form the white
snow,
Falling so soft and falling so slow;
While others again
But melt into rain,
Dropping like tears wherever they go.

But who can know where *some* snow-
flakes go?
Those who weary of life as they blow,
And never reach to the earth below,
But up in the sky
So silently die, —
Oh, who can tell where these snow-
flakes go?

IN MEMORIAM.

W. N. H.

HE was a friend indeed,
With all a friend's best virtues shining
bright;
It was no broken reed
You leaned on when you trusted to his
might.

I know of what I speak,
For well I knew, and loved him too, for
years;
And though it may seem weak,
I yet can scarce think of him without
tears.

His earnest nature spoke
In all he did, and ruled him through and
through;
And failure never broke,
But urged his powers e'en greater things
to do.

His soul was free from stain ;
As bright and pure and clean as man's
can be ;

No sordid thought of gain
Could ever tempt its manly purity.

His mind, almost too keen,
Was ever searching something more to
know ;

And sometimes, too, I ween,
A thought original was his to show.

His heart was true, — so true
To those he loved, that naught disturbed
its trust,

Whatever they might do, —
Unless they proved unfaithful or unjust.

And so he passed away,
Beloved of men, at peace with God ; and
I, —

I could not bid him stay ;
But still I hope to meet him by and by.

A SCORE OF YEARS AGO.

IN the days when I went courtin',
How merry the time did flow !
In the days when I went courtin',
A score of years ago.

We wandered by the seaside,
And on its waves did row,
And floated on our love-tide,
A score of years ago.

We met whene'er we chanced to,
And that was oft, I trow,
For it needed but a glance to, —
A score of years ago.

By day or night to greet her
My steps were never slow ;
And the moonlight was far sweeter
A score of years ago !

No task was hard but waiting
Till "next time" we might know;
For love's youth scorned belating,
A score of years ago.

And when, at last, I faced her,
She said nor yes nor no;
But in my heart I placed her,
A score of years ago.

And naught has ever broken
That first and holy glow
In which our love was spoken
A score of years ago.

And should fate frown upon me,
I 'll heed nor weal nor woe,
So I 've the lass who won me
A score of years ago.

But where 's the use of talkin' ?
I ween I 've said eno' —
Oh, lucky was my courtin',
A score of years ago !

PALE TWILIGHT.

PALE Twilight, clad in mantle misty-gray,
Comes, like a sad-faced nun, at vesper
call,
And for a moment lingers on the earth,
Uncertain whither she shall wend her
way.

One hand she gives to Day and one to
Night,
In vague mistrust, till doubt at length
prevails ;
When, with slow-stealing step, from both
she flees,
And in the hazy distance fades from sight.
And Day and Night, each baffled, turn
away
In wondering silence at her sudden
flight, —
The one, to rest until to-morrow's sun ;
The other, to assert her dark imperious
sway.

SEPARATED.

It may be we shall never meet in life,
So far apart our paths now seem to lie ;
And yet, O Love, methinks I fain could die
Unvexed, might I just once but call thee wife !
Just once ; and then, full satisfied, the knife
Oblivion holds might strike, and I scarce
sigh ;

And yet perchance 't were sweeter thus to lie
Enwrapped in hope, and free from love's
fond strife.

For now, I hold thee so thou canst not change
E'en if thou wouldst, while I may dream
thee true.

And if on earth our lives no hope may show,
They may beyond if God but so arrange.

And we can wait — the years will be but
few —

And when we meet, no parting need we
know.

NOT FOREVER.

O LOVE, it may not be. Our weary feet
Must learn to walk apart and seek to hide
In what is right all other thought beside.
And yet to us is given a life complete ;
For like two brooks, whose waters never
meet,
But in their joyous course flow side by
side
Until they mix at length in ocean's tide,
So may we too our various ways entreat,
And passing on together through life's
waste,
Not one, but two, yet seeming to be one,
So pure our faith, so high our hope to win,
Find at the last our wandering paths so
traced,
That into Heaven's great ocean they
shall run —
And there our lives may meet and know
no sin.

DADDY.

THERE 's a something about the word
Daddy
That gives to my heart-strings a pull,
Though I hear it but carelessly spoken,
Though my brain is with others things
full.

It is not or grand or euphonious,
And it lacks in a deference, we know ;
But 't is sweeter, in accent and utterance,
To me, than all other words show.

I first heard its small prototype babbled
By lips which were rosy and soft,
And which ne'er were content with one
prattling,
But the sound loved to multiply oft.

And it grew to be almost a language,
Whenever I happened in sight ;
And 't was Dada, and Dada, and Dada,
All over the house, day and night.

And was talking more sweet e'er invented,
Or that went more direct to the heart?
'T was a tongue that was taught by the
angels,
And which they to the earth did impart.

And in time, as the summer days, waning,
One year to another did add,
A laughing, impertinent treble
Developed the Dada to Dad;

And I had not the heart to rebuke it,
Though I know 't would more proper
have been;
But it fitted so well her who spoke it,
'T would have pardoned a far greater
sin.

So it easily grew into Daddy,
And remained so, by custom grown
strong,
Through the few happy years that were
left it
To sing out its life's joyous song.

And one morning I heard it but faintly ;
And another, it came not at all ;
And then — but God dealt with me gently,
Or else I had fallen, like Saul.

And the house, it was drear in its stillness,
It mattered not night-time or day ;
There was naught to disturb the lone
silence,
Save the echo of things passed away !

Oh, yes, there is something in Daddy
That I never can wish to forget ;
Though it speak to me ever so sadly,
'T is a voice to love's best music set.

And I hear it when others are talking,
And in dreams, too, I catch its sweet
tone ;
For there's something, there 's something
in Daddy,
That is spoken to my heart alone.

TWO WORDS.

HOME and love are but little words,
But make they not the whole world bright,
As e'en God's sunshine seems more light
When 'livened by the song of birds?

And more, indeed : to them respond
The chords of life, — the power to do,
To bear, to win ; and something, too,
Higher than these, — something beyond.

A CRADLE-SONG.

HUSH, hush, he 's sleeping ;
And in the gloaming, the angels roaming,
 Peep softly in,
And night-dews, weeping,
The flower-buds stopping, pause in their
 dropping,
 For fear of din.

Hush, hush, he 's sleeping,
And o'er his slumbers, with magic
 numbers,
 The fairies weave,
Their love-songs steeping,
His eyelids closing in sweetest dozing,
 Ere yet they leave.

Hush, hush, he 's sleeping ;
So softly breathing, in rest's enwreathing,
 No sound he makes.
Safe in His keeping,
Whose love undying is our relying,
 Until he wakes.

INCENTIVES.

WAIT : to those who wait, time will relent ;
Keep whole thy patience, break it not,
And ere thou deem, thou find'st the spot
Where opportunities consent.

Trust : to those who trust, all things
prove true.

Have faith, and faith will make thee strong,
So strong, indeed, 't will not be long
Ere thou shalt do that thou wouldst do.

Dare : to those who dare, fortune gives
hand ;

Be brave, and shrink not to do right :
This thing alone will give thee might,
And help thee fate itself withstand.

Reap : those who would reap, such rule
must own,

And thus success shall call them friend ;
If not, and failure be the end,
Their effort shall their loss atone.

GONE.

I CRIED out to the days of my youth,
But no answer came back to my cry,
Save the pattering sound of the rain on
the roof,
And the moan of the wind-spirit's sigh.

And again did I call, but more faint,
For something within me held back ;
But still naught did I hear save the rain-
drop's plaint,
And the wail of the storm-driven wrack.

And a consciousness swept me across,
So sudden 't was like unto pain ;
And I called no more, for I was not at
loss
Why I heard but the wind and the rain.

And I sat in my silent despair,
And wondered — and gazed at the sky ;

While a voice swept by on the rushing
air,
Which seemed whispering the words,
“ Good-by ! ”

.

And the rain still beat on the roof,
And the wind still murmured its cry ;
But naught did I hear save the steps of
my youth
As they fled to the years gone by.

FAITH.

I.

THERE doth to every one belong,
Though we would fain own no such
thing,
A yearning as for something strong
To lean upon unquestioning.

It matters not what his degree,
Or high, or low, this truth is sure, —
No man of woman born can be
Unto himself a perfect law.

And so, in natural sequence, then,
Some other one he seeks to find,
Whose strength shall strengthen his again,
And guide him when his path is blind.

And this implies a perfect trust
In him he hopes may help his way;
For doubt, e'en shadowed, ever must
Forbid all faith and tempt dismay.

And perfect trust must be begot
Of perfect love in him we trust ;
For otherwise his hand might not
Prove true to do the things it must.

But where, then, shall we look to know,
Upon this earth, such man as this, —
One who of power possessed shall owe
No thought to self, nor act amiss ?

Nowhere, indeed, can one be found ;
So is it, that when doubts arise,
Bewildered do we look around
Until our gaze reveals the skies ;

There, now we feel, one Being dwells,
Who joins to wisdom perfect love ;
And ever, as our conscience tells,
His willing help sends from above.

And thus we grow from doubt to faith,
All other things but proved untrue,
Until we rest in God at length
The yearning that so long we knew.

II.

For faith is but the perfect trust
Which God's great love compels us to ;
When once we learn, as learn we must,
How little we ourselves can do.

It is the symbol of our will
Laid tribute at the feet of Him
Who cares for e'en our smallest ill,
Though worshipped by the Cherubim.

It is the precious aftermath
Of pride, cut down by failure's sword ;
It is the light across the path
That leads up to the throne of God.

It is the outcome of the heart
When, with its weakness face to face,
It lays aside its coward's part,
And humbly bends the knee to grace.

It is a childlike thing, forsooth,
Yet fraught with power beyond our ken ;

For it bespeaks eternal truth,
And brings down God to live with men.

Divine in essence as in use,
A gift, not bought, but freely sent
To those who, casting all else loose,
Accept God's promise as 't was meant.

It saves our souls from dead despair,
When grief, too mighty, holds us down;
The conqueror's part it makes our share,—
To wrest from suffering hope's bright
crown.

God's angel, lifting up our strength
When trampled in the crush of life ;
Enabling us to gain at length
Safe exit from the mortal strife.

III.

Its being lives in God's behest
Acknowledged to our hearts within,
And springs from out the need of rest
Which He alone can give — from sin.

Its home is in the chastened heart,
Content to feel that God is just ;
Who will not from His word depart,
But gives His peace to those who trust.

Its strength from man's own weakness
springs,
And thus a constant force supplies ;
And in the hope its presence brings,
Its power of help and quickening lies.

Its creed suffices for its quest,
And is of grand simplicity, —
He who all wisdom is, knows best ;
He who all love is, kind must be.

Its pride is in humility,
And self-surrender is its joy ;
Its outgrowth is sweet charity, —
The love of man, without alloy.

It gives us peace while life doth last ;
It gives us hope when death doth come ;
And when this world is overpast,
We know that faith will lead us home.

THE DANCE OF THE CLOVER.

SEE how the clover blows, red and white
 clover,
Courting the joyous breeze, bending it
 over !
 Bowing with stately grace,
 Each towards its neighbor's place, —
 Sweet-scented clover !

Coyly the laughing wind urges the
 dancing,
Towards every clover-top, slyly advancing,
 Till on the carpet green
 Such sight was never seen,
 Young and old prancing !

Gayly they nod and turn, careless of
 graces,
With but the thought of joy on their
 bright faces,

THE DANCE OF THE CLOVER. 61

And, as the music flies,
Faster they fall and rise,
All in their places.

Butterflies, hovering near, hasten away,
Droning bees, honey-bent, care not to
 stay ;
Tossed by the quickening breeze,
Frightened, they seek the leas,
Filled with dismay.

Dew-drop and lady-bug, hurled from their
 hiding,
Float away into air, seeking abiding.
Naught, though, the clover heeds,
As through the dance it speeds,
Of their faint chiding.

See ! to a quicker strain fast are they
 flying,
Dancing for life and death, yet never
 dying ;
Whirling to right and left,
As of all sense bereft,
Every nerve plying.

62 *THE DANCE OF THE CLOVER.*

Then comes a sudden pause, — all is
now over!

For the gay frolic wind proved but a
rover,

And each, with drooping head,

Sinks in its grassy bed —

Good-by, sweet clover!

LOVE'S WAY.

LOVE hath no seasons or to come or go ;
All times are his, with none to say him
 nay ;
The humor seizes him for frolic play,
And lo ! a dart is sped ere yet we know.
Then quick our blood's slow current is aglow
With maddened impulse which we may not
 stay ;
And naught indeed will now its smart allay,
Save one sure thing—if but perchance it
 show,
Some heart, like-wounded, beating with our
 own.
To it the power is given Love's dart to draw.
When, oh, so great our joy, it doth atone,
Beyond all scope, the pain we knew before !
And now, no longer bleeding or alone,
We laugh at Love, and fear his bow no
 more.

TO A RAIN-DROP.

RAIN-DROP, oh, rain-drop, what wouldst
thou say,

Tapping so wistfully on to the pane?
Knocking and knocking, again and again,
Art thou afraid of the winds at play?

Or art thou driven against thy will,
And forced to do what thou wishest not?
Dost thou moan thy home in some cloud-
lined spot,
Or long to be with thy mates in yon
rill?

Why patter so sadly thy constant tap,
Pattering, tapping in pigmy might,
Shedding thy tears in a mortal's sight, —
Wast hoping to rest in some fairy's lap?

Or hast thou a message thou fain wouldst
bring
From the storm-cloud's home, — some
voice to earth,

That thus thou art striving to force to
birth

With the steady rap, rap, thou dost sing?

.

I cannot tell, but patter away ;

To me thou com'st as a lullaby ;

And the muffled sound of thy gentle
cry

Soothes me to rest in its threnody.

TWO HEARTS.

Two hearts went out upon the heather,
To watch the sunset's glories fade ;
And while their watching thus they made,
By some strange freak they came together.

Two had they come, but home retreating,
One single shadow seemed to flit ;
And — how shall sages reckon it ? —
Only *one* heart was loudly beating !

And yet, the cottage door wide swinging,
Two figures in the hall-way stood ;
And — was it night birds in the wood ? —
Two voices seemed a love-song singing.

A QUESTION.

WHO then am I, to stem
With my disapproval what a man would do,
When, placed as he, I, too,
The same thing might enact I now condemn?

And yet how prone to urge
Itself as judge is this same I, called
man,
Not his own sins to scan,
But with self-righteous lash others to
scourge!

One spoke, in ages past,
Whose words of wisdom men might well
recall, —
“Let him, among you all,
Whose hands are free from sin, the first
stone cast.”

But no one moved to strike,
And no one spoke, for all felt guilt confessed.

Oh, what a sad unrest
Would be our lot if judged in manner like !

Forced we should be to hide
Our conscience-smitten heads far out of sight.

Is it not then more right
To judge, if judge we must, on mercy's side ?

THE OWL.

“TOO-WHIT, too-whoo !” is his cry by
night,

And he sings not through the day ;
So all we get from his owlship's might
Is “ Too-whit, too-whoo ” always.

And thus it is with most of us here, —
We utter our little note,
And then we silently fall to the rear,
And into the ages float.

AWEARY.

WOOD-FERNS, anemones, violets, too,
Sing to me, tell me, oh, what would you
do,
Loved not your loved ones to welcome
you home,
Tell me, O snow-drops, oh, where would
you roam?

Bluebird and sparrow and little brown
wren,
Come sit beside me, deep down in the
glen;
Oh, had you not each one your own
homely nest,
Tell me, O robin, oh, where would you
rest?

Tell me, ye winds, as ye blow through
the trees,
Tell me, O brook, on your way to the seas,

Speak to me, spirits of cloud and of air,
Whisper me softly, is life worth despair?

Answered the wood-fern, answered the
jay,
Answered the brook, as it sped on its
way:

“Dark though the night be, dawn comes
at last;
Trust then the future to banish the past!

“The bright bow of hope is e’er set in
the sky
In token of helping, when faith seems
to die;
And all things are possible, think we
but so,
To the strength of a pleading our heart-
strings well know.”

Anemone, violet, king-bird, and wren,
Brooklet and wind-spirit, tell me again!
And lo! while they whispered so soft
through the air,
Joy filled her happy heart — gone was
despair.

THE WAVE.¹

I DANCE o'er the sea in my joyous glee,
And I frolic the shores along,
While on my white crest the mermaids
rest,
And chant out their weird song.
I roll the sand far up on the land,
And form the glistening beach,
And strew it with shells and the sea-
weed's bells,
With the salt dew clinging to each.
In the caverns deep, on the rocky steep,
I boom and echo in thunder,
And my dripping spray around them
doth play,
As I toss my arms asunder,
While the bright drops fall, like a silver
pall,
On the wave-nymphs swimming under.

¹ Suggested by "The Cloud."

The fisherman's boat I gently float
In its search for the scaly treasure ;
And the yacht's white sail on my bosom
doth trail,
Whose search is for naught but pleasure.
And I lap the side, in my gurgling tide,
Of the ocean's monster ship,
Who deems it but play, as she steams
on her way,
In my dark-green surge to dip.
But let her beware if ever she dare
To cross my angry path ;
The frolic wave that her keel doth lave
Is a sea-god in his wrath.

I bathe the feet of the maidens sweet
As they gambol upon the shore,
And the swimmer strong I buoy along
As he seeks the breaker's roar.
The sea-birds rest, as though in their nest,
On the curve of my swaying form,
And I rock them to sleep, on my bosom
deep,
In a cradle soft and warm.

And I sing the song of the ages long
As a lullaby to each, —
The sound of the waves as they break
in the caves,
Or surge on the sandy beach.

I make my home mid the white sea-
foam,
And I joy in the rushing surf ;
On the sunken reef, that moans its grief,
I 've played since the day of my birth.
I race with the gale, and I toss up the hail,
As it falls on my gleaming breast,
And day nor night was ever the sight
Of the waves in perfect rest.
I watch the sun in the course he must
run,
And I give him a home at night ;
I laugh with the moon and grant her, as
boon,
To sway the tides — for her light.
The bright stars and I both sing to the
sky,
When night o'er the earth throws her
pall,

And in my dark sheen they oft twinkle
at e'en,
Like the lights at a fairy ball ;
And the phosphorous glare that some-
times I wear
Is the token I show at their call.

The dawning day, as it hastes away,
Its first greeting to me e'er gave,
And the golden gleam of the sunset's
dream
Prints its good-night kiss on the
wave.
And the gentle dews around me diffuse,
And sink in my lap to rest,
And the tinted glow of the rain-cloud
bow
Reposes upon my breast.
I gather the snow, as it falls so slow,
And it sleeps in my heart for aye,
And the drops of rain I welcome again
As they come back from the sky ;
I pluck the flowers from the ocean's
bowers,
Where their wilful beauty hides,

And I bear them afloat in their pink-
shelled boat,
To deck the sea-kings' brides ;
And I roll up the pearls they wear in
their curls
When they swim in my rippling tides.

But I glory most when the fiery host
Of the tempest-king come down,
And challenge my play, by night or by day,
For the prize of the sun-girt crown.
'Tis then in my might I rise up to fight,
And I laugh as my strength I feel ;
I gather my force, and heed not remorse,
As I see the air-spirits reel.
The lightning's blight sinks down in
affright
As it touches the plumes of my crest,
And struggles in vain, with its scorching
train,
My onward march to arrest.
I greet it with scorn, and ere it be born
'Tis wrapped in a watery shroud,
And mutters the groan of its dying moan
In the thunder's echo loud.

The wind's wild force against me doth toss
Till its breath gets faint and low,
But onward I roam in my chariot of foam
Till the winds are forced to go ;
And with howls of despair they rise into
air,
And flee from the conquered field,
While proud to the blast my white pen-
non I cast,
And clang on my victor's shield. —
And the tears of pain that they send
down in rain
Show the punishment they share,
When the news they bring to their
rugged king
That the waves have beaten the air.

But oft in my breast, after such unrest,
My passion is hard to quell ;
And I long, in my wrath, to follow the
path
Of the war-god's mighty spell.
I swell with my pride, and scorn to
glide,
As in days when I feel more humble.

But surge on my way and scatter my
spray,

And rage and tremble and tumble.

And rising on high I challenge the sky

Or the air or the earth to fight,

And when none make reply I pass them
all by,

And wrestle my comrades' might;

And we spend our strength on each other
at length,

Or chase one another from sight.

Oh, fierce is the power, in my angry hour,

That hurries my course along,

And oft I regret, when my wild moods
set,

The doing of so much wrong.

To seize the whale by his fluky tail

And hurl him aside is naught ;

But to sweep off the boats as if they
were motes

In a rushing tideway caught,

Or to tear a great ship, in my maddened
grip,

Or to kill in my angry strife,

Is a woful thing, and ever must bring
A sadness over my life ;
And this is the cause, as it breaks on the
shores,
Or booms o'er the distant lee,
Of the sad, sad tone in the wild waves'
moan,
That always comes up from the sea.

LOVE'S PLANTING.

OH, Love is like the roses, —
It buds to-day and blooms to-morrow ;
And then there comes a time of sorrow,
Which of it quick disposes.

Oh, Love is like the plane-tree,
Whose growth is slow but ever greater ;
And as it grows, it grows but straighter,
And storms assail it vainly.

So, maidens fair, take warning,
And if you hope your love be lasting,
And safe defy the world's cold blasting,
Mark well its day of dawning.

Well placed, it stands forever,
And if the soil be only worthy,
Its life will be both brave and sturdy,
And time can change it never.

But if 't is planted badly,
In ground that 's loose and meanly
 shallow,
No bloom its branches e'er will hallow,
And you shall rue it sadly.

Then choose its home, oh, kindly,
And nourish it with hearts e'er faithful;
And then to you 't will prove so grateful
That you may trust it blindly.

LINES WRITTEN ON A BUST
OF SOCRATES.

O SOCRATES,

Whose God-touched ear, unwitting,
pressed so close

Against the doorway of a future age,
That, listening, thou didst catch the far-
off breath

Of what the coming years conspired to
teach ;

Who, dying, died not, conscious, as thy
hand

Unshrinking grasped the poisoned cup
and pressed

It to thy lips, it held not Death but Life ;
Wisdom and Truth's self-chosen votary,
Standing alone, yet ever standing firm
Mid scoffing crowds and ignorant dispute,
Till martyr's death crowned for thee
life's stern faith, —

82 *ON A BUST OF SOCRATES.*

Thou art not dead, though buried ages
 make
A mighty mound 'twixt thee and us.
 Thy lamp,
Still burning, sheds to-day its pale, pure
 rays
Unchanged, illuming all the centuries
From then to now.

APHORISMS.

BE true : he who is true is strong, —
Strong in himself, without the aid of men,
And holds a buckler which shoots off
again
The bitterest shafts of enmity and wrong.

Be pure : he who is pure shall feel
An inward consciousness naught else
can give,
'T will keep him blest so long as he
shall live,
And after life shall God's own self reveal.

Be kind : and kindness will come back.
The pity which for others now you know,
Will, when your want cries out, uncalled-
for show,
And, helped threefold by love, nothing
you'll lack.

Thus live : and life will hold no tear
Unbalanced by a joy, save those which
 flow
In chastened gladness, as we learn to
 grow
Nearer to God, and farther from things
 here.

ALONE.

I SAW a boat sail on the sea,
But not upon the shore was I,
 For I was far away ;
And yet I saw what then I saw,
As plain as now one face I see
 Which by me e'er must stay ;

For 't was the face of one I loved,
And 't is the face of one I love,
 And in the boat it was ;
And gayly looked and gayly spoke,
And thought no thought save joy ;
 And then there came a pause.

The white sail shifted, and it hid
My face one moment from my sight ;
 And when I saw again,
A storm had risen, and the boat
Upon rude waves was tossed about,
 And trembled like an aspen.

And dark clouds rolled across the sun,
And loud the harsh winds screeched in
glee,

And hoarse the thunders roared ;
While bolts of flame, with zigzag flash,
Went hurtling through the startled air,
And fierce the rain down poured.

And then I saw my face no more —
Save once when, such as angels wear,
A smile upon it shone ;
And some one called my name aloud,
And darkness came, and well I knew
That now — I was alone.

DAY'S LIGHT.

DID ever you think how the light of day
Varies in its differing play
As it takes its joyous way

Onward toward the west?
See the morning sunlight clear,
Rosy-red and full of cheer,
Fresh and pure and always dear, —
Think you 't is the best?

Nor too cold nor yet too hot,
Glorious-bright yet dazzling not,
Happy in its happy lot,

Banishing the night;
Singing its sweet song at dawn
To the day so newly born;
Bidding us to hope, not mourn,
As we arm for fight.

And the noonday sun with its yellow heat,
In its fierce down-pouring beat,

Glorying in its sway complete
O'er the land and sea.
In it now no thought of play,
As when first it met the day ;
No frolic game with color's ray,
In merry, happy glee.

Naught it seems but molten fire,
Urging an intense desire,
Working as 't would never tire
Till its task be done ;
Pouring floods of scorching light
To the left and to the right, —
Thus it rages, at its height,
Wondrous noonday sun !

But as westward now it slowly descends,
From its fierceness it unbends,
And a gentler greeting sends
To the weary earth ;
And the evening's golden sun
Seems not like the self-same one
That the noontide looked upon,
But some newer birth.

Soft it shines in radiance fair,
Painting gleam-tints on the air,
Drawing pictures here and there,
 Framed in golden haze ;
Flitting bright among the trees,
Casting shadows on the leas,
Laughing with the passing breeze,
 Full of joyous ways.

Now, in color's brightest glow,
To the world it fain would show,
And its bravest glances throw
 Ere it seeks its rest.
And in tender, gentle rays
Softly o'er the earth it plays,
Till it sinks, one glorious blaze,
 In the waiting west !

TO A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

FAIR Queen, dost know thy power for good
or ill?

No other queen holds sway so wondrous
great;

Thy bidding speaks to men of love and hate,
And prompts their untrained hearts to spare
or kill,

As thou mayst hint in thy imperious will.

Thou hast a gift as mighty as is fate,
Which, while it lasts, proclaims thee potentate,
And failing, leaves behind its influence still.

Oh, mayst thou then so use it, gracious Queen,
That naught befall thee, so thou curse the
day

When first thou learned that Beauty was thy
right;

But, as thou art so glorious in thy mien,
An equal glory may thy deeds display,
And thus thy virtues shall sustain thy might.

LOVE'S WITCHERY.

WHAT spell so uses Love, that we go mad
Though he but gently touch us with his
hand?

The bravest and the best cannot withstand
The softest prick from Cupid's magic gad,
But seem, the more the smart, to be more
glad.

'Tis witchery indeed that, thus unmanned,
We fain are forced to yield to Love's demand;
But know ye one who ever said 't was sad?
As men dig gold from stubborn rocks and
soil,

And passing it through fire, shed off its
dross,

So Love doth seek, within our harsher
mould,

Those crystals, deeply hid, which ever foil
All other power to find, and yet whose loss,
Thrice purified by Love, outweighs all gold.

THE SIGNAL-GUN.

RINGING on the air of night,
With a fierce, despondent might,
 The boom of a single gun !
Ringing on the air of night,
From a something out of sight,
 Hark ! another, second one !

Men have heard, whose hearts are stout,
Men whose courage none may doubt,
 But they backward shrink aghast ;
For the night is black without,
And the waves, with maddened shout,
 Answer to the storm-wind's blast, —

While throughout the angry sky
Bolts of flame careering fly
 With portentous, dazzling glare ;
And the thunder's hollow cry,
Rolling, echoes far and nigh
 On the heavy, murky air.

Builded craft there may not be,
Could hope to live in such a sea,
Or its crushing wrath abide ;
Yet the lightning's savage glee,
Flashing on the rocky lee,
Shows a boat has gone outside.

God in mercy help their way,
Who such fearful task essay
On a night as fierce as this ;
Struggling through the blinding spray,
Tossed by giant waves astray,
While around the mad winds hiss !

Ring on the air of night,
With a fierce, despondent might,
The boom of a single gun !
Ring on the air of night,
From a something out of sight,
Another and another one !

.

At the dawning of the day
On the beach two corpses lay,
Washed up by the rising tide ;

Humble fishermen were they,
But they did what few men may, —
 To save others, they had died.

All undaunted by the might
Of the seething waves that night,
 They had saved the shipwrecked crew :
Hero work and hero fight ;
But they called it simply right, —
 These men and two other two.

And, their task well-nigh complete,
Mid the driving rain and sleet,
 And the ocean's maddened roar,
These two, swept from off their feet,
Sank beneath the storm-wave's beat, —
 All the rest safe reached the shore.

.

Lowly graves received them here,
Lowly tears fell on their bier,
 And they faded from earth's sight ;
But an angel's pen wrote clear,
Placed to Christ's name very near
 Theirs, who died for men that night.

TO WHITTIER

ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

WATCHMAN for eighty years upon life's plain,
What of the day, what of the night, hast
learned?

So long thy mind upon thy task hath turned,
So long thine eyes have watched the wax and
wane

Of changing seasons come and go again,
That what thy faithful vigil hath discerned
Must be such knowledge as may not be
spurned,

Speaking to man in no uncertain strain.

— But lo! the lesson which thy life doth teach
Is here while yet we ask : “ Do what is right,
And trust all else to God.” ’Tis simple
speech,

But holds within it sense of wondrous might.
If men but keep thy life-words well in reach,
No useless watch is thine, of day and night.

A MOTHER'S HEART-CRY.

IN the great world of men —
Ah, boy, God guide thee then,
When thou art called to fight thy way
In the great world of men.

Pitiless and selfish,
Unheeding, scornful, cold,
Is the great world of men,
With naught but self on which to clasp
their hold.

No mother's love can help thee there,
Or answer to thy call,
Except by prayer —
In the great world of men.
Alone must thou or rise or fall;
And which it be
None there will care,
In the great world of men.

Alone, save that forever
At thy side His love shall go,
Whose hand has guided thee thus far so
safe,
Since thou didst draw thy first faint baby
breath.
Lose not this love, dear boy, but trust it
so,
As naught else thou shalt trust on earth,
And 't will not fail thee, nor through life,
Nor yet in death ; and from all harm
'T will shield thee, then, e'en when thou
strugglest
In the great world of men.

A THOUGHT.

A THOUGHT is borne within the brain
By impress that so subtle is and quick,
That ere it is we know it not,
Nor whence, nor how, but only that it is.

And this strange thing is happening now,
Was happening then, and will endure
 with life;
And e'en in sleep we think and think,
But do not grasp our thoughts unless in
 dreams.

And so, too, though they seem to fade,
They never die, but live again when
 called
By memory to our aid or use.
And lo! each day doth multiply their
 sum.

Where then, indeed, shall be the end?
For as we speak their meaning into
words,
Or breathe it only to our souls,
One thought, by contact, breeds another
thought.

And this is constant while we live ;
Then others, having taken thoughts
from us,
Increase them likewise, and they go
From them in greater number on through
time.

Thus is it that since man first spoke
No thought has died ; but through the
centuries,
Augmented in a ratio grand,
It lives to-day, and wanders through the
world.

AN INTERIOR.

THE lamp burned bright on the table,
And the curtains were closely drawn,
While the wood-fire crackled upon the
hearth,
Of hickory logs long-sawn.

And the shelves of books, o'ercrowded,
Looked a welcome as though they spoke,
As the old high clock in the corner
Gave forth its nine-o'clock stroke.

And the portrait above the mantel
Gazed down in ancestral pride,
And smiled at the wild-flowers set on the
desk
Some well-known ink-spots to hide.

And a terrier lay on the rug,
Close-crouched to his mistress's chair,
But his eyes held out an expectant look,
Which he seemed to want her to share.

And she paused in the book she held,
As a sound she listened to hear,
And the dog gave a start and a bark of
joy
As the carriage-wheels drew near.

And they crunched on the gravelled path,
And stopped the front door beside, —
And a cheery voice and a well-known
step,
And a door flung open wide.

A SONG OF LONGING.

O HAPPY winds, as ye wander about,
 With the sunshine glad for your guide,
And wrestle the leaves from the autumn
 trees,
 And then scatter them far and wide !

How fresh is your sound to my weary
 ear,
 So brimming with frolic and glee !
Oh, would that with you I also might
 float
 Far away to the shining sea !

I can see it glimmer, from where I sit,
 And the boats, as they glide along ;
And the great white gulls, with their
 wings outspread ;
 And I hear the fisherman's song.

And I know there are children on the
beach

As happy as little elves.

But alas, for the sick and weary of
earth, —

They have no one but God and them-
selves.

BABY.

OH, you happy, idle mortal,
Playing round Life's golden portal,
Whose to-day knows no to-morrow!
What to thee is sin or sorrow?

Flower of love and hope and beauty,
Scorning work and scorning duty,
Filling all our hearts with pleasure —
Oh, you blessed baby treasure!

Making home where'er thou turnest,
Making life a thing in earnest, —
With thy prattle so unmeaning,
Yet so full of wondrous seeming.

Prince of tyrants! all uncaring,
Ruling with a rod unsparing, —
May you sometime prove deserving
Of such patient love and serving!

May God's angels round thee keeping,
Guard thee waking, guard thee sleeping,
Guide thee safe, through life's offending,
To that life that knows no ending.

AS I LOOKED OUT OF THE
WINDOW.

AN IMPROMPTU.

THE sun was shining bright,
And the snow was falling light,
 But distinctly.
And every snow-flake glinting
In the sunshine's merry tinting
Seemed like diamond dust descending
In a shower never ending.
Up and down the crystals flew,
Right and left they dazzling blew,
Such a wild, uproarious crew,
 Traversing the sky.
Flickering through the limpid air,
Flying, glancing everywhere,
With a kind of glorious stare,
 Sailing low and high.
Still the sun shines, still they fly,

Rushing fast or slowly by,
Setting Nature's laws awry,
Sun and snow together !
Neither to the other bending,
Each its own career defending,
Which will yield, when comes the ending,
Diamond flakes or sunshine's rays ?
How I wonder, as I gaze !
Was there ever, ever, ever,
Such abnormal winter weather !

NEWPORT, R. I., Feb. 17, 1888.

EVENTIDE.

Low falls the sunset's parting gleam,
All mellow in its tinted glory,
And the little babbling stream
Whispers sweet its good-night story.

Birdlings soft are in their nest,
Resting 'neath the mother's wing,
For they looked out toward the west,
And felt sure they must not sing.

Bees and butterflies have flown
Far away from mortal sight,
And the night-wind makes its moan,
Restless to begin its flight.

In the air, the hush of eve
Lingers o'er the tired earth,
And the daylight's spirits leave,
Conscious of their vanished worth.

In the sky, a single star
Glimmers like a beacon-light,
Showing, through the mists afar,
Heaven's first sentinel of night.

And the dew-drops diamonds fall,
Gleaming bright on leaf and flower,
While the lengthening shadows call
Silently the vesper hour.

Peace, peace, peace, the whispering air
Breathes on all things great and small;
And the echoes, everywhere,
Softly answer — peace for all.

LOVE'S CONTENT.

How art thou fair, O Fair? I scarce can tell.
I love thee so, I do not care to know;
E'en as God's flowers in their beauty grow,
I deemed thou too, O Love, must grow as well.
Thine eyes are blue like sapphires, and their
spell

Holds witchery I would in vain forego.
Thy rippling hair is golden in its glow
As gold fine-spun, and as it would compel
The snowy whiteness of thy smooth-laid skin
To mock the rose, the red blood paints thy
cheeks.

But though I thus might all thy charms
disclose,

Where is the need? thy virtues lie within.
Who seeks the treasure hid 'neath mountain
peaks

Heeds not the wayside flowers the pathway
grows.

THE MERRY DAYS.

QUICK as the flash of a loud-booming gun,
Bright as a ray from the bright noonday
 sun,
Strange as a dream when the night-sleep
 is done,
 The glad days of our youth go by.

Blessed with a joy that no other days
 know,
Springing to life as the wild-flowers blow,
Careless, unheeding, they come and they
 go, —
 The days that can never return.

Tinted with colors so varied in tone,
Holding a promise they only may own,
Happy and joyous, how soon are they
 flown, —
 The bright, merry days of our youth.

Golden with dreams that are formed but
 to fly,
Silvered with hopes that we know can
 but die,
Glowing with pearl-tints flung down from
 the sky.
How wondrous they seem to us now.

Nought can replace them, or near or afar;
They flash on the air like a night-falling
 star.
And the sparkles they leave but the after-
 time mar
With the thought of things that have
 been.

Let them, then, speed in their own magic
 way,
Alluring, inconstant, filled full with life's
 play:
But whate'er be our future, our hearts
 will still stray
To the dear days, the brave days of
 youth.

SOME TYPES.

I.

THERE are such men as deem a flow of
words
Speaks Genius' self, and tributary forms
To fame's bright stream; and so they
overwhelm
With speech of tongue or pen their
fellow-men;
Such are not wise to trust as guides or
friends.
Their very constant babbling makes them
weak;
It drains their tissues e'en too fast, and
leaves
The soil but dry in which to grow ideas.
A mass of writing, like a mass of lead,
Must make impression; but the stamp it
bears
Will rest upon the die beneath, which
marks

It out, in lines that cannot be effaced,
A thing of glory or a thing of doom ;
And all its bulk adds not a feather-weight
To make it good, be not the goodness
there.

Yet through a senseless ignorance, or
worse,

Through blind-eyed vanity, from self out-
sprung,

These men take heart to think, too oft
indeed,

That from the pregnant juices of the
world

They shall crush out by force the flatter-
ing taste

Of hard-earned reputation — and they
fail !

Small wonder too ; for if but words might
count

As pediment on which to rest secure

Fame's mighty column, then, i' faith,

The veriest babbler might its height
essay,

By virtue of his power of constant speech,
And e'en the dictionary's self compete,

And win the prize their wordy efforts
claim. —

And better oft 't would be for all mankind
If thus the sapient contest might con-
clude !

II.

And then there be another set of men
Who, wrapped in learning's shroud, seem
like to die

Unless each word they utter, in its sound
Shall punctuate some meaning of their
own,

Beyond the ken of common minds to scan;
And which they feel none other but
themselves

Could speak as well, — in truth, could
speak at all.

And then they turn in wrath upon man-
kind,

Because they see not as *they* see, forsooth,
Nor hear as they would fain to have them
hear !

Such men as these are silent, self-con-
tained,

And feed upon the weaknesses they
loathe ;
And thus their diet constant disagrees,
And keeps them in a ferment of abuse,
And acrimonious belchings 'gainst the
world ;
And yet they claim, but fairly, Wisdom's
gifts ;
And if her gracious mantle they might
wear
More courteously, upon their bodies
placed,
And not drawn, caul-like, over their wise
heads —
Which thus shuts out their sight from
things without,
And leaves them only introspection's
gaze —
They might see things which now they
never see,
And have a wider scope from which to paint
Their narrow canvas with their views of
life.
But too much learning is a dangerous
thing !

And when 't is helped by other circumstance,
As wounded vanity or fretted pride,
Becomes intolerant, and speaks itself
awry
In language unbecoming and perverse.
And even Genius' self may sometimes
dwell
Within such brains, nor deem its home
unfit;
Like lighted lamp within a cloistered cell,
Whose rays shine out upon the world
beyond,
Obtruded by the gratings they must pass.
And men gain guidance through the
darkening night,
And care not that the light distorted is.

III.

Behold this man, if man he may be called;
A name which fits him better would
destroy
His very racehood, yet still leave to him
Some seeming semblance to his present
guise.

But let it pass; he'd heed it not, if
named.

Taking life's canvas in his bloodless
hands,

He paints out conscience with the brush
of self,

And gazing calmly on the view it gives,
Is satisfied to live and breathe and be, —
Thus much, no more; for more he cannot do.

His heart is but a sack that once held
blood,

And claims no function now except to
beat.

Self is his god, and at its narrow shrine
He pays the only worship he bestows.
No thought for others e'er his breast
invades,

Except so far as they his aims may
help.

What aid he might to them extend is
naught

To minds like his, and enters not his
view.

In very fact, he cannot feel at all,

Or will not — save the feelings look
within ;

His polar star is but his own sweet self,
Which in the same direction ever points.
And so life passes with him ; and at
last,

When he has breathed and touched and
seen and heard

And tasted self in all its varied forms,
Perchance for years of satisfied content,
E'en self palls on him, and he dies, for-
sooth,

From pure inanition, since no longer
Can he swallow even self ! And is there,
Think ye, on the broad face of this our
earth

One heart to bid him stay, or mourn his
loss ?

Not one, I ween ! Doth such fate tempt
thee, friend ?

Then do not thou as he.

IV.

And still another type remains to tell,
That well its hard-earned gains deserves
to hold ;
Or be they laurels from the bough of
fame,
Or baser flowers off the tree success,
It matters not, for both are honest spoils,
And know their place in virtue of their
right.
The chiefest claim this class of men
maintains
Is based upon their work, their power to
do ;
And this they share with conscience in
their lives,
And thus do merit all their actions find.
Whatever talent, great or small, may add
To their endeavors, matters but to them,
In way of ease, in their appointed task,
And gains them quicker praise for quicker
work.
The work itself is done as sure without ;
Whether it be a sermon they would write,

Or guide the ploughshare through the
fallow soil.

They battle earnestly with life and hope,
And grumble not at failure overmuch,
Though cherishing success, but try again,
And e'en again, if disappointment comes.
Such men must win at last, and ought to
win ;

For brave endurance is a gift from God,
And like the sunlight shines with strength
divine,
And warms the earth into a giving mood.

And thus these types increase ; these are
but few

From out their number, and do multiply
Until they form mankind, each one of
whom

Doth play his given part upon life's
stage.

ONCE-UPON-A-TIME.

Is there a time in life compares to that
Which watches slyly over plighted love?
So sly indeed its watch lest it disturb,
It never shows itself, and hours play tit-
tat,

As around the dial the hands they shove,
But never loud enough love's joy to curb!

Whatever all the years to come may hide
Of hope or fear, of pleasure or of pain, —
And this young love in its vainglorious
strife

Is made up of all these and more beside —
There is a something none have dared
explain,
Which makes it different from aught else
in life.

And oh, it matters not our after-dream!
E'en this same love upgrown and proven
true,

Or things more worldly, honors, station,
wealth, —

How tame, how very tame, shall they all
seem,

To that strange time when love so sudden
grew,

To that first kiss obtained by willing
stealth !

CONSENT.

SURE as daylight follows starlight,
Or as sunshine follows rain,
Doth man's manhood yield its birthright
When to love it may attain ;
And naught seeking save one presence,
Glories in its rapturous essence.

Wondrous law of Nature's making,
That the brave should seek the fair,
And that she, all else forsaking,
Feels his strength and nestles there ;
Caring naught, so love be constant,
If the whole world prove remonstrant.

He is aided by her weakness,
Conquered by her simple faith,
And to love's engendered meekness
Learns to look for conquering strength ;
Full content to bow his stature
To her softer, purer nature.

As its fragrance to the heather,
Or its plumage to the dove,
Are their lives close linked together
By God's law of perfect love ;
Brightest boon to human sorrow
Hope and faith from fate may borrow.

SUNSET.—A SKY PICTURE.

THE sun is dying in the west,
The home he ever loved the best ;
And though no longer he may stay,
Yet lingers with the lingering day.

And ere he sinks into the night,
He summons all his fading light,
And tints it with a myriad hues
Which Nature's hand alone can use.

Rainbow colors, all his own,
He paints around his golden throne,
And sets his jewels in the sky,
To deck himself before he die.

Amethyst and sapphire blue,
Opal, gem of every hue,
Ruby red and emerald green,
Topaz pure and diamond's sheen, —

These are the treasures, rich and rare,
That gleam within his circlet fair ;
And make his chamber, though of death,
To glow with color's brightest breath.

And then upon his gorgeous bed
Slowly he lays his weary head,
And gathers round him, as a shroud,
Every soft and fleecy cloud.

And so he gently sinks to rest
Within the brightly-tinted west,
And all the stars their places take
Around his couch, their watch to make.

.

And now the moon, with mellow light,
Illumes the darkness of the night,
While all the world its sleep may take
Until another day shall break.

A HEART-THROB.

IN my heart two words are ringing,
 Ringing sad in anguished tone,
And the one word is — forever,
 And the other is — alone.

Naught disturbs their plaintive utterance,
 Naught will hush their constant moan,
But 't is ever — one forever,
 And 't is always — all alone.

God in mercy rule my spirit
 More in keeping with His own,
That forever may not daunt me,
 E'en when echoing back — alone.

Tune my heart-strings that they break
 not
 Till their strength be stronger grown ;
Help me feel that if — forever,
 Still I shall not be — alone.

AND THEN?

A BREATH of warmer air,
A swelling bud upon the willow-tree,
A blue, blue sky, so bright and fair,
A softer murmur in the distant sea.

And then?

A robin or a bluebird's flight,
Or joyous song, so blithe and clear,
An eager crocus peering towards the
light,

All speak the promise of the opening year.

And then?

Ah! then, the cold, gray, deathlike days
unnamed,

The snow-clouds and the weary snow,
The blustering winds which blow so half
ashamed, —

And winter grimly smiles, but does not go.

And then?

Then do we hope no more,
But sit beside the fire, crushed and drear ;
Till, ere we know, Summer flings wide
the door,
And June is here !
And then ? Ah, then !

In the warm sunshine, and the joy
Of rosebuds, and the soft green grass,
Why, we forget — and all annoy
The treacherous spring maintained doth
pass.
And then ?

Then the loud-babbling brook,
The mountain-side, the birds, the breeze,
The hum of insects, and the shady nook,
Where summer winds play tunes upon
the trees.
And then ?

The level fields, the browsing herds,
The sea-shells on the beach, the ocean's
roar,

The sunrise and the sunset — these are
Nature's words,
Which whisper to man's soul forever-
more.
And then?

Ah! then the subtle, nameless charm
Of youth and love and hope, the moon-
light walk,
The ecstasy, the pain, the trembling arm
Upon another's laid, low murmured talk.
And then?

Ah! why seek further? Is it not
Sufficient answer that the world is glad;
So glad, that all its past, forgiven and
forgot,
Is now as naught? that life and love go
mad, —
That June is here?

HER LIKENESS.

WHO is my Love? It needeth not to say ;
Enough if I but whisper what she be,
And then none other canst thou dream is she.
For who but she may all her charms display?
Her heart is guileless as the new-born day,
Yet seemeth all aglow with wilful glee,
So filled is it with love's sweet witchery.
Her chestnut hair gleams with a golden ray,
Beneath her deep-fringed lashes brown eyes
show,
And in her dimpled cheek, so soft its touch,
The rosy flush of morning loves to lie.
Doth need it more to speak that thou mayst
know,
O Love, who she may be? Are there two
such?
Ah ! now thou know'st, and yet thou dost not
fly!

LIFE'S BOAT-SONG.

WHEN our arms are young, when our
 arms are strong,
How joyous we pull on the stream of life !
We float with the tide, we rest on our oar,
We feel we can easily reach the shore,
If rocks come in sight, or the wind goes
 wrong,
Or the rolling waves should rouse up in
 strife.

When our arms are old, when our arms
 are weak,
How we look to our oars as we slowly
 float !
We keep close to the shore, on the shady
 side,
We seek from the ripples and currents
 to hide,
And we know that if once it but spring
 a leak,
We shall find our doom in the sinking boat.

TEMPTATION.

WHO can forecast, until temptation come,
If he shall stand or fall?
It happens to us all
To plan upon occasion what to speak ;
But when occasion shows, by some
strange freak
We rarely say our speech,
Or words within its reach,
But talk a different tongue, or else are
dumb.

Nor can we better tell how we may act
When fate, as if in wrath,
Shall cast across our path
A prize, that through dishonor we may
win,
Yet none shall know or even guess our
sin.
Our heart's most cherished hope
Is now within our scope ;
Who dares to say what Satan may exact?

Nor you, nor I, nor any mortal man —
For men have failed, deemed good,
And men, deemed bad, withstood,
Thus circumstanced, the tempter's touch
of shame.

Too weak we are to battle at such game.
And that old prayer we know,
Thus taught us long ago —
“Into temptation lead us not,” it ran.

INSIGHT.

HAVE we stood beside the bier of our
hopes,
And seen them buried one by one from
sight
In the sad, relentless grave of Failure,
And then, bereft of strength to dare
again,
Gone forth to die?

Have we stretched out our hands
To Heaven in prayer, and cried aloud to
God,
In anguish of the soul, to give us
help,
When those we loved the best were called
away, —
And no help came, and we were left
alone
To weep, to mourn, ay, e'en perhaps to
doubt?

Or have we felt the crushing nothing-
ness

Of pride and wealth and worldly reverence,
The taunting mockery of Self, when once
Our wholesome life is touched by wan
disease ?

And, all our cherished strength proved
vanity,

We know the presence of the grim Shadow
Hovering o'er us and cannot urge it off ?

If these or such as these have been our lot,
Perchance we may have learned that
Peace and Rest

Oft lie through Sorrow's gate, which,
though it stand

Wide-open for us all, we never pass
Because we would, but only when we
must.

.

And may God's help be theirs who, hav-
ing passed,
Can find no home within ; but when they
hear

The heavy hinges creak to close, un-
taught,
Would free themselves from seeming
barriers ;
And so burst forth and seek escape.
What good ?

A HYPOCRITE.

THE self-righteous man wears the hypocrite's mask ;

To seem not to be is his well-mastered task,

And the hem of his garment, though covered with texts,

Is only a means to mislead and perplex.

His preaching is orthodox, so are his views,

And the "spirit of missions" might walk in his shoes ;

His gifts are well known, they are part of his game,

And of men being spoken of, add to his fame.

His life is so perfect, he'd ne'er condescend

To be seen with a sinner, much less be his friend.

And the rags of a penitent rouse his disgust,
As anything lowly and tattered e'en must.

“ Not as he is, I thank thee, O Lord, am
I too,”

Is his muttered thanksgiving when guilt
comes in view.

“ My sins are all hidden from sight of the
world,
So my banner of righteousness ne'er need
be furled.”

The garb of humility fits him not well,
'T is too tight in its set for his virtues to
swell ;
He needs the repose of his own roomy
stays,
In which he can turn at the same time
two ways !

But do what he will, he can get little
ease,
Nor his prayers nor his deeds do his con-
science appease ;

And the flesh of his skeleton trembles
with dread
Lest the bones be disclosed ere yet he
be dead.

Like the moth, whose soft plumage is
killed by a touch,
The contact with truth his proud bearing
would smutch ;
And he 'd show as he is to the veriest
fool,
With God as his precept and Self as his
rule.

A SONG.

BLOW, blow, ye winds !

Through the tops of the bare trees blow ;
For my soul would whisper unheeded
The things that were — long ago.

The wild-flowers bloom and the sun
shines,

And the bright birds sing as before,
But my heart-throbs beat in the world
alone,
There is no one to answer them more.

And men are as strong, and women still
love,

And childhood is ever sweet ;
But I long in vain for the hope I once
knew,
And for words I dare not repeat.

Blow, blow, ye winds !

Through the murmuring pine-trees
blow ;

But never again shall I hear the step

That I watched for — long ago.

HER COMING.

A MOORISH LOVE-SONG.

IN the love-light and the twilight,
Underneath the trysting tree,
There, while waiting for the moon-night,
There, while waiting, Love, for thee,
With the white-light of the star clouds,
And the booming of the sea, —
Like a dream-song in the distance,
Was the coming of thy feet,
With a pattering insistence
Answering to thy heart's quick beat.
And I wondered, as I conjured
Hopes of how we two should meet.

Oft I wandered toward the pathway,
Oft I wandered back again,
'Neath the young light of the moon-night,
'Neath the shadows of the fen.

And a cricket chirped beside me,
And a wild bird upward flew.
Through the bushes in the starlight
There was some one coming through !

And I heard a whispered murmur,
Which was music to my ear,
And I felt a heart-throb beating
To my own heart very near.
And the moonlight and the cloud-light
Were as nothing to me then ;
For all Nature seemed but love-light
As we wandered down the glen, —
As we wandered in our heart-might
Far beyond the world of men.

STRANDED.

FAREWELL, O dream of happy youth !
That dream which once I thought to be
so fair ;
For then I had the strength to do and
dare.
But now — I know the bitter truth.

Too fast I urged my willing boat,
Too hard I tugged upon the easy oar,
Until at length it would endure no more :
It broke, and I was left afloat.

In vain I sought to guide my course
With what perchance might still to me
remain ;
But as 't would mock my tired, weakened
strain,
The more the boat did seem to toss.

And those passed by whom once I led,
But none could stop to give me aught of
aid,

For some were selfish, others were afraid;
And then I wished that I were dead.

For I could see no hope save death;
My strength was waning, night was near
at hand,

I was alone, and out of sight of land,
So faint I scarce could draw my breath.

.

Yet I was let to live; and torn
And bruised I landed on the rocky shore;
But I may use my poor frail boat no more,
And the high hopes I had are gone.

MY DEN.

A ROOM, low-studded, not too large or
grand,
Where everything obeys the master's only
hand,
Its sacred dust e'en left in peace to lie
Secure from prying of the housemaid's
eye;
With deep-set windows, — two I deem
enough,
Well curtained with some thick, dark-
shaded stuff,
Admitting light, but keeping out the glare,
And tempting restfulness to linger there.
With here a chair and there a sofa's
curve,
Which when not used for books as seats
may serve;
A desk for writing, a fireplace for cheer,
A drugget on the floor, by use made dear;

And, more than all, the well-filled shelves
 around,
Rising from floor to ceiling at a bound,
Lining the room on all its sides but one,
Where stands the chimney — and my
 picture 's done:
Except that floor and window-sills do
 share
Unnumbered volumes which the shelves
 won't bear;
And scattered manuscripts are flung about
In ways that some might deem a woful
 rout,
But which to him who holds their secret
 clue
Reveal an order marvellous but true.
Add some engravings, good and old and
 rare,
A bust or two selected with fond care;
And he with such a home content may
 rest,
And let old Time e'en do his worst or best.

TWILIGHT.

DAY and Night once met together,
In the golden summer weather,
On a field of purple heather,
Far from human sight.

Each in turn displayed its power
To the utmost in that hour,
Dreading to be forced to cower
'Neath the other's might.

And though making deep obeisance,
Each maintained its being's essence,
Till they found each other's presence
Hard beyond compare.

So they softened in their bearing,
Each the other's glories sharing,
And the other's colors wearing
On the whispering air.

Thus a new light was created,
And to mortals it was fated,
Whene'er Day and Night are mated,
 Its soft rays to know.

And they call it Twi-light ever, —
Two made one upon the heather ;
And thus linked they reign together,
 In the evening's glow.

FROM THE STORY OF A HACK-
NEY-COACH.

A FRAGMENT.

BUT the saddest thing that ever I bore,
And many sad sights did my lot entail,
Was a weeping woman, haggard and pale,
On her way to the hospital's friendless
door.

Her face was hard, but her voice was mild,
And her manners told of a better day.
But now on my cushions outstretched
she lay,
And I saw, when she moved, she was great
with child.

She moaned to herself as we hurried
along,
And her muttered words I was forced to
hear,

And they struck on my heart like something drear,
So full were they of grief and wrong.

Neither maid nor wife nor widow was she.
Her mother rank was all that she owned ;
And if ever sorrow for sin atoned,
I wis she was pure in her purity.

Deceived by one on whom she had leaned,
A devil in heart, though a man in shape,
She thought him a god ; and when no
escape
Remained from harm, she found him a
fiend.

He had won the faith of her girlish heart,
And she trusted his love with a perfect
trust ;
But false to his vows, to that love unjust,
His baseness had played but a traitor's
part.

And now, alone, and broken by shame,
Her time was come ; and with no hand
to save,

Helpless and hopeless, she longed for the
grave.

And thus to the hospital gates we came.

But scarce were they passed, ere, groaning
with pain,

That pain which a woman alone may
know, —

Her face grew white and her pulse grew
slow,

And she never spoke word upon earth
again.

Her worn-out frame had no strength to
endure

The strain which Nature imposed that
day, —

For alone she had striven to fight her way,
And work had been scarce and food was
poor.

But now she was gone; and the child
went too,

Which seemed to be better, for God
knows best;

And what could his life have been but
unrest, —

And a pauper's grave was their only due.

But the angels' tears fell in drops from
the sky

As the sod was laid on the new-turned
earth ;

Then the sun burst out, and a rainbow
birth

Seemed to welcome a soul to its home
on high.

.

Oh, man, how long shall hideous lust
Efface the image of God from your heart?
More low than the brutes in its hellish
part,

It rouses a loathing beyond disgust.

To slay a man were a pardoned sin
Compared to the guilt its promptings
urge ;

For the death of a soul is its joyless dirge,
And a coward's part it ever hath been.

To crush a fond woman's happy faith,
To leave her a wreck on the shores of
 night, —
Better, far better to kill her outright,
Than thus to abuse your manhood's
 strength.

There's never a word in the tongues of
 earth
To express the base vileness of human
 lust.
“Dishonored of men, of God accurst,”
Is the brand that's stamped on its evil
 birth.

ASPIRATION.

HIGHER, higher,
Purified by suffering's fire,
Rise, my soul, until thy flight
Pierce its way to Heaven's light.

Clearer, clearer,
Until, ever drawing nearer,
There shall burst upon thy sight,
Through the darkness of earth's night,
All the eye of faith may see,
Set in God's eternity.

SAVED.

God's chastening hand was laid upon my
life
With such a grievous force of woe, that
crushed
And stunned I fell beneath its heavy
weight
Full prone to earth, and there I prostrate
lay ;
And cared for neither day, nor night, nor
time,
Nor aught beside, save only death itself,
Which would not come.

Sleep fled my eyes, and even tears
Their wonted boon refused ; all hope
seemed dead.
I could not pray, I scarce indeed could
think.
No pain I felt, but only something tense,

Like iron bands, tight-drawn about my
head ;

All else was apathy, save that I knew
The bitter consciousness of life. And
thus,

Alone, with madness pregnant in my brain,
I waited for my fate.

Then in the night,
When all about me slept, One entered in,
And he was clothed in white, and round
him shone

A dazzling light, like that of day ; while on
His face there was such look of peace
and love,

I wondered ; yet I could not speak or
move.

And as I gazed he gently stretched his
hand,

And touched me on the brow, and then
sleep came.

And day and night went by, and still I
slept ;

And when I woke, I knew my doom was
past. —

I was let live again, and learned to feel

That what God does is even for the best.
But who he was that came to me that
night

I know not; only this I know full well,
'T was some one sent from God.

RECOMPENSE.

THE curses of poverty
 Lightly descend
On those who through duty
 Their blessings defend.

They fear not its presence
 Their heart-throbs to still ;
For love in its essence
 Defies every ill.

They ward off its smiting
 By joining their hands.
Their strength, by uniting,
 Resists its commands.

When love keeps the door,
 E'en troubles must fail,
Though pressing us sore
 In their power to prevail.

And if there be sorrow,
We all must endure;
Yet hope can we borrow,
If love is but sure.

HE. — A SOLILOQUY.

VERY handsome must he be,
If he thinks to marry me ;
And in all that he may do
He must prove a lover true.

His position must be such
As no carping tongue can touch ;
E'en a crest, if his by right,
Would not spoil him in my sight !

Chivalrous and brave, of course,
He must be, without resource ;
For a coward I despise,
And all the very name implies.

Youth and vigor he must own, —
These, indeed, for much atone ;
With a form of athlete grace
Fit to match his manly face.

If he 's rich, why, very well,
 But on this I would not dwell;
 Even were our hopes not high,
 We might manage, — he and I.

Good? Oh, yes! that 's well enough;
 But he must not be a "muff" —
 And I think perhaps a *spice*
 Of the "Divvel" 's rather nice!

Still, he must be honest, kind,
 Pure in heart and bright in mind;
 Do for others all he can, —
 Be, in short, a gentleman.

Intellectual, famous? No;
 Into such things I won't go;
 Let him only prove to be
 Everything he seems to me.

.

Yes; but somehow my ideal
 Wakes sensations much too real!
 Can it be that while in sport
 I have let my heart get caught?

Oh, how dreadful ! Do I blush ?
Listen — some one 's coming — hush !
How the thoughts I would not own
Suddenly to facts have grown !

'*Twas* his picture that I drew,
All unconsciously, 't is true ;
And if now no sign he make,
'T is no use — my heart will break.

That 's his step ; and now — Oh dear !
How I 'm trembling ! — he is here ;
Does he love me ? Yes — and I ? —
Foolish little heart, good-by !

CERTAIN PEOPLE.

THE goody-goody people in this world
Show well, 't is true.
But little praise, in sooth, do they deserve
For what they do ;

And even less for what they do not do,
For to resist
Bespeaks temptation, which they never
feel,
Talk as they list.

Too cold for passion and too weak for sin,
They gain no blame.
E'en Satan scarce exerts himself to track
Such worthless game !

Good, from their ignorance to compass
wrong ;
And should they try,

Such dire mistakes they would be sure
to make,
They 'd go awry !

And yet they play their part with con-
scious pride,
To folly blind ;
And deem themselves, indeed, superior
far
To all mankind.

Well, let them ; little harm, if little good,
Can come of such.
But, Heaven be thanked, all men are not
alike,—
'T would be too much !

ASLEEP.

THROUGH the half-closed shutters the
sunbeams played,

And they danced on the wall in glee,
While the wind's soft breath through the
casement strayed,

So fresh from the summer sea !

And quiet reigned in the darkened room,
And a sense of peace and rest,

With no sound save that of the ocean's
boom,

And the twitter of birds in their nest ;

And the crooning note of a mother's song,
As she rocked her darling to sleep,

And saw that now it would not be long
Ere the angels their watch might keep.

And the song died away in a gentle sigh,
While the breeze and the sunshine
smiled,

For the mother's eyes closed dreamily,
And she slept with her sleeping child.

WOULD I?

HAD I known thee proud and false,
would I?

Ah! then, Love, oh, urge me not.
Death had seemed to be but nigh,
Had I been by thee forgot.
But I had no need to die!

Had I known thee hard and cold, would I?
'Tis not, Love, for me to tell;
But, oh! ask me not the why,
For thou know'st I loved thee well.
Now, no need to ask me why!

Had I known it could not be, would I?
Yes, O Love, though silently,
Had Heaven answered not my cry,
I had loved on lovingly.
But Heaven answered to my cry!

Had I known thy heart not mine, would I?

Then, O Love, I 'd made no moan.

Thou hadst heard nor sob nor sigh,

But in Heaven thou hadst known.

Love, *my* Love, for aye and aye!

WE SING BUT A SONG.

WE sing but a song, and our childhood's
gone,
Ere yet we've had time to breathe ;
But little we care and little we mourn,
For the roses are buds, that we wreathe.

We laugh but a laugh, and our youth has
flown,
And we know not how or when ;
But we look with surprise as the truth
we must own,
That we may not live it again.

A smothered groan, and our manhood's
done,
And we tread with more careful ways ;
And our looks are bent towards the set-
ting sun
With a silent and anxious gaze.

172 *WE SING BUT A SONG.*

A whispered prayer and a murmured
hope,
And the years that have known us so
long,
Now hold us no longer within their
scope ;
We have sung to the end of our song.

HE COMES!

HE comes ! my lord and hero comes !
All Nature wakes to life, to give him
greeting.

The very trees have heard his step,
And whisper mid their trembling leaves,
He comes !

The flowers raise their drooping petals,
And answer back, He comes.

The air is filled with fragrance, and the
sun

Throws brighter beams to gild him as
he comes.

Now must my tell-tale face subdue its joy,
Lest it may show too much. Be stilled,
O throbbing heart, — beat not so loud ;
Away, ye mantling blushes of my love !
But, ah ! what folly ! even now my steps
Run riot with my will, and force me on,

That I may catch his first embrace ; nor
let

The flowers and trees steal from me what
is mine,

Mine only. Lo ! his step is near. He
comes !

CONTENT.

WE cry aloud, or in our secret heart,
For things we have not; and we deem,
if so
That God may choose our foolish prayer to
know,
We then shall be content: we play our
part;
For 't is this very urging, under which we
smart,
To gain these things our hearts compel us to,
That helps us do, and makes our striving
grow
Until we gain what first impelled our start.
To be content would be to stop our lives,
And bid the world stand still; no effort then
Would we essay; and thus in vain on earth
Contentment seeks a chance of easy birth.
Yet happiness may come to him who strives,
Whate'er his rank amid the world of men.

TO J. R. S.

FAIR critic of my verse,
Endowed with wisdom and with wit,
And, gift more kind, with sympathy,
And yet who nobly scorn'st,
Though tempted oft too near to it,
To tip Truth's sting with flattery,
I owe thee many thanks.

Not only for thy skill,
Which fits thee like Minerva's helm,
Nor for thy patience, sorely tried,
But for the gracious will,
Pointing thy words, that they o'erwhelm
By neither praise nor blame; yet hide
In no way thy just views.

It happens so with thee,
To share with Charity her crown,
That e'en thy sharpest thrusts, though true,

Ne'er seem to disagree ;
No poison lurks within to drown,
In dregs of malice, truth's fair due ;
And thus they win their way.

And in thy willing praise,
Spontaneous in its very flow,
Despair itself must flee away ;
So that in both the ways
The critic's power is wont to show,
To urge or warn thou claim'st thy sway.
Once more I thank thee, friend.

July, 1887.

OUR HOPES.

BLEST dreams of the future,
Or near or afar ;
Bright thoughts that we nurture,
Our hopes to us are.

E'er prompting our actions
For better or worse ;
Love's happy distractions
To fortunes perverse.

What though that so often
They live but to die !
Does their being not soften
Life's wail to a sigh ?

Though smitten by Fate's rod,
They yield not their sway ;
But rise like the sun-god,
As day succeeds day.

God's angels, e'er guarding
Our lives from despair ;
Heaven's bucklers, retarding
The arrows of care.

Ah ! without them, indeed,
A sad fate is ours ;
But that they intercede,
We must die like the flowers.

■

SHE. — EXACTIONS.

VERY human must she be
From the start,
If she would be loved by me
With my heart.
No calm goddess, mild and staid,
Me could hold,
E'en though every limb were made
Out of gold.

She must be a maiden pure
In her thought,
If her charms would me allure,
All unsought.
No one selfish in her mind,
Seeking gain,
Ever honest love did find —
Oh, the pain !

She must be a woman true, —
That she must ;
Proud a woman's work to do, —
Sacred trust.

No coquette with pretty face
Would succeed,
E'en with every winning grace,
Me to lead.

Beauty's power she may not claim
As her right ;
But for this she holds no blame
In my sight.
Eyes of brown or eyes of blue,
Matter not,
So the soul be brave and true, —
Not a jot.

She may *have* a winsome face,
If she will,
Yet with e'en a homely grace
She 'd fulfil
All I've sought so long, and more,
I confess,
So her heart I might feel sure
To possess.

Oh, with such an one I swear —
Holy tie !
All my life and love I 'd share,
And for aye !

SELF-CONQUEST.

CONQUER but self, the mightiest foe in
life,
And of no other need'st thou stand in
fear ;
For none will care to prove himself the
peer
Of him who vanquishes in such a strife.

The fight must be endured from day to day,
For oft thine enemy will seem to die
But to rouse up anew, for he is sly
As he is strong, and hard indeed to slay.

But easier shalt thou find thy task ere
long,
By constant practice growing in thy
might ;
And struggling as thou dost on side of
Right,
Success is sure if but thine arm keep
strong.

LINES

WRITTEN ON THE FLY-LEAF OF "A DAY
IN ATHENS WITH SOCRATES."

THE cultured style, the gracious ease,
Each word conveys, is sure to please.
The vigorous thought of ancient sage
Maintained intact on every page ;
And yet its meaning made so clear
That he "who runs may read," nor fear
A false construction put upon
The grand old words from Helicon.
What English mind, so pure and true,
Has dared these classic themes construe,
And placed before a modern age
Philosophy's most sacred page,
I wot not. This alone I know, —
Such jewels in such setting show
Not only the translator's art,
But kindred soul and mind and heart.

December, 1886.

LOVE AND PAIN.

SING, sing, ye whispering trees,
Gently swaying in the breeze ;
Murmur soft and murmur low
What the listening air would know, —
That by bands we may not sever,
Love and pain are linked together.

Pain, which only joys create,
Pain of ecstasy and fate,
Pain which hope intense begets,
Pain too sweet to force regrets, —
Such pain as love, and love alone,
Can e'er provoke or yet atone.

Who such pain would once forego,
So the love were sure to show ?
Who but deem such love more dear,
Since it once was tinged with fear ?
If any such there chance to be,
Then all unworthy he or she.

A BOOK 'S A BOOK.

IN ANSWER TO E. L. D.

A BOOK 's a book, but 'twixt two books
't is plain
The difference lies in what they may
contain.

Each in itself its destiny upholds,
And in its leaves its own sure fate infolds.
The one we cherish, venerate, and prize ;
The other gasps for air and quickly dies.
The one, by fame caressed, immortal lives ;
The other seeks the peace oblivion gives.
On one the future smiles with beckoning
hand ;

The other helps the housemaid's fire
expand.

But which to which no man may dare
foretell ;

To time alone the future yields its spell.

To-day we fail, to-morrow we succeed ;
The fact remains, — the why is *why*,
indeed !

E'en Genius' self can claim no fairy wand
To give it gaze into the far beyond.

Men live, whose fate the world ne'er
cares to learn,

Yet o'er whose ashes incense fires burn.

Men die, whose lives seem redolent of
fame,

But, soon forgotten, scarce exist in name.

What our own luck may be, dear friend,
who knows,

Since fortune such uncertain favor shows ?

But little need we care — or you or I —

“ Sic transit ” — bah ! you know the rest.

Good-by.

RECONCILIATION.

THE world is fading from my anxious
sight,

The sunset shadows cling about my
path,

I hear the echoes of the coming night ;

Great God, look down in mercy, not in
wrath,

And help me, through Thine own eternal
Son,

To say unquestioning, Thy will be done.

The world was dear, perhaps too dear,
to me,

With all its joy, its hope, its cherished
love,

And hard it was sometimes, O Lord, to see

The narrow path which only leads above.

Forgive my wandering steps, for sake of
One

Who taught us first to say, Thy will be
done.

Forgive the pride which made my heart
rebel,

My want of faith, my weak and doubt-
ing soul,

The dread of death, which holds me in its
spell,

And which e'en hope of heaven can
scarce control.

O Lord, in pity grant, ere life be run,
That I in trustful love may say, Thy will
be done.

May this my prayer, unworthy though I be,
Through Christ's dear grace be wafted
to thy throne,

And through His death may I, from sin
set free,

When death doth come, not feel I am
alone,

But, fought the fight, through Christ the
victory won,

Say, with unfaltering faith, Thy will be
done.

HUNTING-SONG.

HARK on the hills to the huntsman's horn,
Joyously greeting the day new-born,
Waking to life the echoes of morn :
Echoes rolling, echoes pealing, echoes
 crying ;
Lower falling, falling lower, echoes dying.

Hark to the bay of the deep-mouthed
 hound,
Catching the scent on the moist-laid
 ground,
Startling the crags and the rocks around :
Echoes booming, echoes thundering,
 echoes flying ;
Softer sinking, sinking softer, echoes
 dying.

Hark to the ring of the rifle's note,
Setting the wild, weird echoes afloat,
As the quarry sinks in the reedy moat :

Echoes trembling, echoes moaning,
echoes sighing;
Murmuring fainter, fainter murmuring —
gasping — dying.

SOMEBODY.

A MAIDEN'S LAMENT.

I AM listening and waiting and longing ;
And Somebody 's waiting too ;
For his spirit to mine is calling
As only *some one's* could do.

I can feel his presence about me,
Though he 's not within my sight ;
And I know that he 's speaking to me,
For I hear him in the night.

And his tones are so sweet and tender,
And his voice is pitched so low,
That the words he thus seeks to render
In my ear alone can go.

But the wooing he still is urging,
Oh, I cannot answer back !
Though I feel all my pulses surging
With the love that he must lack.

And so here I linger on hoping
That Somebody soon may come,
And claim what for him is but waiting,
And make in my heart his home.

.

GO, WARRIOR, GO!

WHEN the stirring trumpets blow,
Go, warrior, go!

Wait not for to-morrow's sun,
Wait not for the foeman's gun,
Wait not till the love-song's done.
When the trumpets stirring blow,
Go, warrior, go!

Tra-titera-tra — tra-titera-tra-tra!

Hark! the call to meet the foe!

Go, warrior, go!

Leave to women sigh and tear,
Leave to slaves their caitiff fear,
Leave all else save sword and spear.
When the trumpets stirring blow,
Go, warrior, go!

Tra-titera-tra — tra-titera-tra-tra!

Warrior hearts the sound well know,
Go, warrior, go!

Bravely let thy banner fly,
Bravely shout thy battle-cry,
Bravely win or bravely die.
When the trumpets stirring blow,
 Go, warrior, go !
Tra-titera-tra — tra-titera-tra-tra !

Round thy waist thy falchion throw,
 Go, warrior, go !
Haste to greet the trumpet's call,
Haste to guard the breach and wall,
Haste, let naught thy soul appall.
When the trumpets stirring blow,
 Go, warrior, go !
Tra-titera-tra — tra-titera-tra-tra !

Lo ! thy charger waits below,
 Go, warrior, go !
Hark, the wild alarum bell,
Hark, the battle's magic spell,
Calling, calling — now, farewell.
When the trumpets stirring blow,
 Go, warrior, go !
Tra-titera-tra — tra-titera-tra-tra !

A CONCEIT.

THE velvet sound of the falling snow,
Which is heard by the eye alone,
As it nestles down on its brother flakes,
With a touch like a silvery tone, —
So soft, so gentle, so murmured its fall,
Oh, the wonder is, that it falls at all,
With its eerie whirl and its whispered call.
The wintry day is still and calm,
As I gaze through the frosted pane,
And the air is filled with the falling snow,
Like the floss from a tangled skein.
Such quietness reigns, I can almost hear
Its sound as it drops on the casement
near.

AN ECHO.

JULY 4, 1776.

LIKE a great rock from Truth's high
 mountain hurled,
By giant force, into the mid-ocean
Of old-time dynasties and rights divine,
Whose mighty ripples, gathering into
 waves,
Relentless beat upon the shores of
 Time, —
The scratching of the goose-quill pen,
 which wrote
The Declaration of our Country's Rights,
Resounded on the universal air ;
And echoing far and wide throughout the
 world,
Proclaimed the sacred name of Liberty
To all mankind.

CONFESSION.

WE wandered o'er the moonlit path,
 And o'er the tangled heather,
 And both our hearts took up the cry,
 Of whether, Love, oh whether !
 Yet neither knew the other's doubt,
 As on we walked together.

But foolish task it proved to be,
 Each from the other hiding
 What both our souls had long confessed,
 But had not dared confiding ;
 And e'er we either of us knew,
 Love took up his abiding !

And then, more foolish still it seemed,
 For now 't was past concealing,
 But each was loath to speak the word,
 Or make the first revealing ;
 And yet our hearts, in wild alarm,
 Were both to Love appealing.

How long indeed it may have been —
 This tumult of wild beating —
I know not ; but some words I heard,
 Which need not here repeating !
And when we wandered back that night,
 Love knew our place of meeting.

TIME'S EPITAPH.

ON every man that dies Time writes an
 epitaph ;
And some are blurred with tears, and
 some provoke a laugh ;
But from his verdict none may hope to
 hide,
'T is writ in letters certain to abide ;
And gives each one the mark his life did
 make, —
Saint, sinner, fool, philosopher, or rake.

HOPE.

LIKE the hand in the darkness we treasure

Which guides our lost footsteps aright,
So Hope comes in Fortune's displeasure,
And leads us anew to the light.

TRUTH.

TRUTH fights for place in every human heart,

Though crushed too oft by things of baser part ;

As e'en amid the weeds the sluggard's garden grows, —

In solitary bloom appears a single rose.

ARIADNE.¹

UPON the shores of Naxos' Isle, vine-
famed,
Low nestling, mid the blue Ægean waves,
Whose lapping tides flung kisses on the
beach,
With lover's frequency, all unsatisfied ;
Where crimson-tinted clouds, the day-
light's torch,
Each morn enflamed, and fragrant winds,
cool-blown,
From off the Southern seas, lulled sleep
at night ;
Where tropic verdure glowed in tree and
flower,

¹ Ariadne was the daughter of the King of Crete, and the wife of Theseus — afterward King of Athens. On the voyage to Attica he basely deserted her on the island of Naxos ; and, overwhelmed by grief and despair, she destroyed herself. She was renowned throughout Greece for her great beauty.

And birds and butterflies, in gorgeous
train,

Filled the bright air with dazzling rain-
bow hues,

Like glittering jewels through the ether
sped, —

On such an isle as this, upon such shores,
Ere yet the eastern sky showed tinge of
red,

There Ariadne came. Alone she was,
Her errant maidens straying far behind ;
And on her beauteous face — and she
was famed

Throughout all Grecian lands for beauty's
spell —

There was such radiant look of joy and
love,

'T was wondrous to behold, — like to a
dream.

And hastening on, and ever towards the
beach,

So keen her constant gaze, to seaward
cast,

She seemed as 't were some one to seek,
perchance

That way pursued, — and Theseus slept
on board
His ships that night ! — but now she was
alone,
And more alone, indeed, she might
not be !
For from her there had passed, to her
unknown,
Her life's best life, her very hope of life,
And with it her proud woman's faith in
love ;
And by her own fair hands, bereft and
mad,
In isolate despair she soon must die.
But this she knew not then, nor did
suspect, —

For 't was but yester eve that Theseus' self,
All glorious in his manly form and face,
Of stature tall, of strength like to the
gods,
Had led her from the hot-blown strand,
on which
They strolled, to where, beneath an
orange-tree,

Full-blossomed, their talk might be in
scented shade ;

And there beside her, on the flower-
flecked grass,

Himself he cast, and spoke, low-voiced,
of Crete

And far-off Athens and of other themes,
Perchance, which lovers' lips so well do
con.

And he had told her that to-morrow's
morn

They should set sail for home ; that he
himself,

Unwilling, must upon his ships that night
Abide, that all might thus be sure pre-
pared

To meet the south wind's early, vagrant
breath,

Which best would waft them on their
lingering course.

— And thus he spoke, as, since their stay
at Naxos,

They twain had dwelt beneath a shep-
herd's roof ;

For this one boon had Ariadne craved,

Not loving well the ocean's wild unrest,
Nor the close crowding of the vessel's deck.
Nor had he gainsaid what her fears did
urge ;

Too well it suited with his base-born plan.
And then he sought her promise to awake
betimes,

That so no chance of failure might ensue,
He granting her indulgence to remain
Upon the shore because she feared the
ships ;

On which, most solemn compact did she
make —

Deeming him kind, and much in haste
to sail —

That Phœbus' self should not outstrip
her start

To meet him at the dawn, — never, indeed,
Suspecting treachery or foul deceit.

Then had she bade to Theseus her good-
night,

With loving kisses on his lips impressed,
With loving, soft embrace about him cast ;
When toward the waiting boat he quickly
sped,

Upon his face a smile men call accurst ;
 But she, all-trustful, hastened to the hut,
 And knowing she must be alone that night,
 Called to her handmaidens to enter in, —
 For many had she (whom they all did love),
 Being the daughter of the king in Crete, —
 And bade them, one each hour, to wake,
 till day

First set his faintest rose-blush in the sky,
 When they should rouse her, minding not
 her sleep,
 And urge with her their way toward the
 ships.

And thus it was — to keep her promise
 true —

That at the dawn she wandered to the
 beach,

So radiant in her face she might have
 played

In tournament with yonder glowing sun,
 And robbed him of his prize ; for if such
 thing

Might be, love-born love could e'en the
 diamond's

Cold, pure form instil with rays unknown
before,
And make it so ablaze with wondrous
light
That men could scarce its dazzling gleam
abide.
And Ariadne's face was not of stone,
Nor was her heart, than diamond far
more pure,
Or hard, or cold; in both love held its
sway.
And now for Theseus, with exultant
hope
Each moment to behold his face, she
sought,
Unwitting of his flight, and hastening
each
Quick step which closer brought her to
the ships;
For there she knew — his own words told
the tale —
He lay that night, and now perchance
awaited
But her coming, at the sunrise call,
To make fast sail for Attica's low shores.

Likewise, the ships were anchored far
 away ;
 For Naxos had no harbors through its
 coasts
 For goodly vessels,—such outside must
 lie,
 Dependent on the slow-paced boats for
 shore,—
 And thought of this, which pushed her
 journey's end,
 Urged her quick feet to even quicker
 tread.

And when at length the promontory
 reached
 From whence the fleet e'er came in view,
 her heart
 Beat fast, and rose-cloud blushes stole
 her cheeks ;
 For had not Theseus promised there to
 meet
 His love, and guide her to the boats
 himself,
 That thus the hated waves she need not
 brave

Alone, which bore them from the safer
land?

But as the high ascent she gained, out-
breathed,

Nor Theseus there, nor e'en the fleet in
sight,

She stood aghast, one moment moving
not.

The early morning mists were drifting
slow

Above the land and sea, and soon would
leave

The bright horizon-line full clear to
view,

When naught her far-off vision would
obstruct

For weal or woe, for hope or dismal
doubt.

And now from place to place she moved
in search ;

But as she gazed and gazed, abroad,
around,

No trace of ships could Ariadne see,
Nor even catch the sound of laboring
oars

Bending beneath their rowers' sturdy
strength,
Or masked by distance into muffled roll.

As thus she stood upon the rock's high
crown,

One foot advanced, firm planted on the
ledge,

Her form half forward bent in eager
poise,

Its silken draperies swaying in the
breeze, —

Her loosened hair tight cinctured round
her brow

By amber bands, and flying far behind,
Like golden threads of light, upon the
air,

Which the glad zephyrs tossed in wanton
play

In myriad tangled skeins of glistening
glow, —

Her eyes more blue than bluest cloud
o'erhead,

Yet seeming black, so stern their strained,
fixed gaze ;

With arms outstretched to seaward, and
a look
Upon her face, beseeching, yet amazed, —
She seemed a very goddess, earth-belate,
Striving her far-off chariot to discern,
And marvelling much its unexpected
loss.

But as conviction forced its pointed
barbs
More fiercely in her brain, her balance
fled ;
And when assured the ships were passed
from sight,
And Theseus gone, — nor word between
them spoke, —
She knew full well they ne'er would seek
return, —
Nor he, nor they, — too deep their treach-
ery reached.
One flash of light woke consciousness of
truth ;
Of truth so base it slew her as she stood,
And everything grew dark. Her heart
stood still,

And paleness, as of death, her brow o'er-
spread.

Upon the gods she called, that she might
die ;

And would have cast herself into the sea,
But slipped, and fell upon the ground, so
faint,

By fierce despair o'erwrought, she could
not move,

But prostrate lay in agony of woe ;
And with her glorious face turned prone
to earth,

She strove to think it some too hideous
dream,

Or some base nightmare of the aching
brain,

From which she would awake ere long
to sense,

And see once more him she had loved
so well, —

So well that, leaving all, kindred and
home,

And many more towards whom her heart
beat dear,

She followed *him* alone in all the world.

Rising at length, frenzy-beset and wild,
Her face agleam with passion's fire and
 scorn,
Her beauty e'en more beauteous in its
 might,
She struck her heaving breast, and cried
 aloud
In accents scornful-strong, though
 checked at times
By choking, helpless tears, love-forced
 but hard :
"Be still, O heart ! beat not for one
 whose troth,
Thrice-plighted, proved no safeguard to
 my love.
From death assured I saved him ere we
 wed,
By giving, at my life's own risk, the clew
Which guided him beyond captivity,
And freed him from the Minotaur's fierce
 jaws,
Agape already for his longed-for prey ;
Whom having slain, he purchased goodly
 ships,
To flee, immediate, Minos' vengeful ire,

Which much he feared, and begged me
follow him
And be his wife. My foolish feet led on ;
and when
At Paros forced by stress of food to
land,
We there were wed. An ancient Parian
priest
Performed the rite ; and when low kneel-
ing at
The altar's base, the sacrifice consumed,
And portions fair-distributed to all,
He took my hand in his — but no, not
now,
Not now would I profane such hour by
aught
That links it to this hideous one. Away,
Away, fair thoughts and dear, ye all are
dead,
Forever dead ! With Theseus did ye die,
And he has gone for aye. O Juno !
Queen ! —
Not Queen, but Mother now, — who
watchest o'er
My coming fate and his, the yet unborn,

Whose cruel father cared not e'en that
once —

One little once — his eyes might rest on
him,

Help me to curse this foully-dealing
man !

“ And yet 't was he first taught me love —
and hate !

This last, not till to-day, — e'en now 't is
gone ;

For how could Theseus do such wrong ?
'T was he first oped the close-shut door-
way

Of my maiden heart, and entering in did
light

Its dormant fires with love's bright torch,
until

At length they blazed with passion's
mighty breath,

Made pure by love's inborn intensity.

Thus, love he taught me first ; and so
't is hard,

Far harder to forget, — too long its power
Hath held my soul supreme, enwrap

In naught but joy, — and yet I must forget

Or die ; no way lies 'twixt these twain,
save hate,

Which will not come, and madness, curse
of gods.

Oh, Theseus, couldst thou not have
waited still ?

Waited but a little time, — for e'en now
I feel, intuitive, the dreaded pain

O'ertake my heart, which thou so frequent
soothed

With kindly deeds and words more
kindly still.

And though I did not die, thou know'st,
as I,

It might be soon ; the learned men so
advised.

And then, hadst thou been free, and I
not known

The blackness of thy heart ! Are all the
gods

High-holding on Olympus' sacred height ?

Or are they grown so weak that Chaos
rules ?

Or is it, Love, that *thou* wast sleeping?
I know not,
Nor do I care, indeed, to know aught
more.

Theseus is gone, and Ariadne soon —
Ay, very soon — must die, it matters not.

“ O love! who teachest us such wondrous things
We knew not e'er before, nor e'er could
know:
That we ourselves are naught alone,
unmate;
That self-forgetfulness is earth's great
joy,
A gift which close behind contentment
walks,
And makes life's service but a happy
play;
Who castest our impurities aside,
Of mind and heart, so that our love prove
chaste;
Who newer breath into our nostrils
breathes, —
The very breath of gods, divinely fine,

The essence of a mighty strength, past
 man's
 Control, yet in its guidance ever true,
 Making e'en pain and death itself a joy,
 So that the loved one suffer not, nor
 sigh;
 Who from our hearts dost pluck their
 fairest buds
 To fashion them to greater size and glow,
 And make their beauty and their fra-
 grance sure,
 That they may live forever, love's own
 flowers, —
 Oh, why dost thou thus trait'rous prove
 to men ? ”

And then did Ariadne cast herself
 Once more upon the ground in weary
 guise ;
 Her eyes, sad-set, drooped heavy 'neath
 her lids,
 While in their look a wild, strange light
 still played.
 But, passion-spent, she crouched upon
 the rock,

And murmured to herself in gentle tone,
Her maidens, circling her around, intent.
“Ah, me !” she spoke, “what fate is
mine on earth !

How can I doubt what Theseus told me
true ?

And yet, to be thus left, thus left alone,
A helpless prey to grief’s slow, lingering
death,

When life and love ne’er seemed so fair
before ! —

But no, I must not doubt ! O thoughts
unkind,

To tempt such unbelief, I heed ye
not !

Men die each hour, but love can never
die ;

E’en death can never conquer love.

The body is not love, as some men think ;
Love is the ever-soul of perfect faith,
Immortal as the gods ! yet well I know
Love hath *one* death, and only one, but
sure.

And the false dart which brings it low
must by

His hand be hurled who holds love's
other hand
In truest trust, — naught else can injure
love."

And now she breathed a tired, weary sigh,
And plucking some few leaves which
near her grew,
Good, as she said, for quench of thirst,
or cool
Of fevered blood, — and both she needed
much, —
She bruised them with a stone, to prove
the juice,
And placing them within her lips, their
strength
Imbided. And none suspected wrong,
but deemed
She, loving much to wander in the fields,
Had learned the uses of the herbs and
roots,
And thus perchance had done for rest
and sleep.
Vain trust! each leaf was deadly, as she
knew,
And left no after-mark to point its deed.

Then resting on the nearest maiden's
lap

Her weary head, she slept, or seemed to
sleep,

But murmured, ever and anon, one name,
The name of Theseus, and of love for
aye;

And once she mentioned Crete and
Minos, king,

And seemed bestruck by fear that they
were nigh.

Thus the unresting hours moved on till
noon,

When, turning with quick pain about her
heart,

Three gasping breaths she urged, as if
for speech;

But speech was well-nigh gone. "Fare-
well, O love,"

The words she seemed to say, then spoke
no more;

And thus it was — that Ariadne died.

O Ariadne ! who, though kingly-born,
Felt woman's heart beat full within thy
breast,

And in thy god-like trust, sustained by
 love,
 Held all men in thy sway, save one
 alone,
 And he most potent for thy good or
 ill ;
 Who walked the earth like some em-
 bodied soul
 Set free, to teach to men, ere now un-
 taught,
 Love's sweetest song,—its own humil-
 ity ;
 Who, left to die upon a foreign shore
 By one whose perjured heart ne'er beat
 with thine,
 Though pledged threefold, as spouse and
 king and man,
 And yet forbore to charge his soul with
 guilt, —
 Though once, indeed, a curse thou didst
 essay,
 When grief's first passion struck its
 mighty blow ; —
 Whose love too mighty proved his truth
 to doubt,

Though close beset by certainty of wrong,
But brimmed thy cup of woe with love's
 best tears,
Thy handmaid Hope, thy fount thine
 own pure soul, —
To thee belongs all faithfulness of
 love,
Far greater than Penelope dare claim,
Or others, less bespoke in mythic lore,
Not e'en the great immortal gods them-
 selves ;
They all did live for love. But thou for
 love
Didst die, — a willing sacrifice, thine
 own !
And lo ! the gods — thy mind and soul
 so pure —
That thou mightst shine, ensemplar, set
 on high,
Of constancy and love — seven bright
 stars ¹
Of whitest lustre to thy keeping gave ;
And in their steadfast gleam, emblem
 befit

¹ The Northern Crown.

Of thine undying faith, by love made
strong,
Thou yet shalt live, love's life thine
own for aye!

Farewell, then, Ariadne! glimmering
faint
Through the blue ether of thy far-off
home,
Thy stars' pale rays, untired, e'en yet
descend
As pure and bright as once thou wert on
earth,
But with them naught of Theseus or
distrust.
Thou knowest all, yet love still holds
its sway.
Farewell!

Nonsense-Rhymes, Etc.

THE CRITIC'S BRUSH.

WHAT a rainbow of colors the critic
Doth hold in his hand analytic !
And he makes the poor poet
To ruefully show it,
If he chance in a mood that 's mephitic.

At the first he will paint him deep red,
By the praise he happens to shed ;
Then he turns him quite blue
By a harsh word or two,
Or ash-gray by his prophecies dread.

And e'en green he may make him appear,
When he daubs him with ridicule's leer ;
And he bleaches him white,
When he scares him with fright
By predicting a hopeless career.

And his skin with yellow he brushes,
 When in spite he condemns all he touches;
 And he makes him look black
 By his angry attack,
 And bright purple whenever he curses.

He does him up brown by a squint,
 And no chance for the future will hint.
 Then he brings a pink glow
 By a hope he may throw;
 But *crushed strawberry*'s his favorite
 tint!

Yet while all these colors he uses,
 'T is rarely that ever he chooses
 To try that one alone
 Which all else might atone, —
 For the color of gold he refuses.

Thus the poet, chameleon-like, glows
 With the hues his critic bestows;
 But it must be confessed,
 Though he 'd glad stand the test,
 That the color he needs most ne'er shows!

THE BUMBLE-BEE.

A thrilling sound my listening ear caught.

BURTON.

Oh, the droning and intoning
Of the humble bumble-bee,
Like the sound of some great organ
Heard across the quiet sea !
It may speak of God and Nature,
But 't is terrible to me, —
For like stern old Calvin's sermons,
It 's suggestive of the D——,
And it brings a sense of torment
From which gladly I would flee, —
Does the humming and the thrumming
Of the humble bumble-bee !

Oh, the droning and intoning
Of the humble bumble-bee,
Like the rumbling of the storm-wind
On some far-off rocky lee !

How it fills my soul with terror
When he whiffs too close to me,
With that vague, uncertain motion
That 's so horrible to see!
For if in my hair entangled, —
And such thing I know *can* be! —
While he fumbles and he tumbles
In his efforts to get free, —

Oh, the droning and intoning
Of the humble bumble-bee,
Like the deep, impatient groaning
Of the great, unquiet sea, —
Would cease awhile, I doubt it not!
But with what malicious glee
Its little sting would play away,
With its *one* and *two* and *three*,
As children on pianos strum,
Is not quite unknown to me!
Nor is it, I am very sure,
To the humble bumble-bee.

Oh, the droning and intoning
Of the humble bumble-bee,
Like the wild and plaintive moaning
Of some wind-entangled tree! —

There are three of them now coming,
 And they 're coming straight for me !
 Oh, avant, ye wretched creatures ;
 To your wildernesses flee,
 With your monotone suggestive
 Of the tortures of the D—— !
 You humming, bumming, thrumming
 thing !
 Oh, you *horrid* bumble-bee !

MARTHA STARR.

MARTHA STARR she used to be,
 Mardie she was called by most ;
 And a prettier girl than she
 All the village could not boast.

But she married and grew fat,
 Which her beauty much did mar ;
 And they called her, after that,
 Nothing else but — “ Mardi Gras.”

THE TWINS.

“So alike,” the old nurse said,
While she shook her solemn head,
“That it’s very hard to tell
How to jedge of sich !”
And you do not sometimes know,
Such resemblance these twins show,
When you see them even now,
Which of them is which !

Then they both were young and small,
And their blessèd baby squall
Did not help one to decide
Which was Jack or Gill.
For they both would cry in tune
Morn and evening, night and noon,
And all other little things
They’d alike fulfil.

Both were fed with the same spoon ;
Both cried out at once, “Goon, goon !”

Both the same big cradle shared,
While apace they grew.
Neither had a speck of hair ;
With blue eyes they both did stare ;
And in all their movements queer
They were one — not two.

But at last it awkward grew
Not to know the *which* from *who* ;
And a plan was hit upon
To distinguish them :
One was tied with ribbons blue,
For the other pink must do ;
And in this way it seemed safe
To dispose of them.

This at first was well enough,
And it saved us many a huff.
While the two were kept apart,
All was well, I trow ;
But alas ! when dressed each day,
Both the strings aside we 'd lay,
And in fastening them again
They 'd get mixed *somehow* !

So in time we let it go,
Telling all the neighbors so ;
And from that day unto this
 No one knows who 's who !
And indeed I doubt if Gill
Knows himself from Jack until
He has asked him, " Who am I ? "
 And he says, " You 're *you* ! "

THE PARSON'S WOOING.

THE most absent-minded of men was he,
And he always will be, I trow;
But the funniest thing he ever did
I'm determined to tell you now.

'T was years ago: but it still makes me
smile
To call up that day of my life.
He had just taken orders, and seemed to
think
He ought also to take a wife.

Of course I had somewhat expected this,
But not in the way that he took;
For he knelt by my side like knight of old,
With a rapt and serious look.

And, "Dearly Belovèd," he then began,
But forgetting what he would say,

He kept straight on with the rest of the
prayer —

Till I rose in a startled way.

Then, catching the sense of what he had
done,

He waited to say nothing more,
But stammering something I could not
hear,

Made a frantic bolt for the door !

And a letter came the next afternoon,
In which he sought all to explain,
And said he thought that 't was better to
write

Than to risk such a scene again !

The kneeling there with his eyes half shut,
And a perfect silence around,
The opening words of the prayer on his
lips —

Had proved too familiar ground.

And he had gone on as had been his wont —

But what more is there need to say,
Since here I sit as his Reverence's wife
And tell you this story to-day ?

TEMPUS FUGIT.

WE were wandering in the belfry
Of an old and famous church ;
And ere long we reached the clock-tower
In our high-ascending search.

And we gazed upon the prospect,
As we felt we ought to do,
And were just about descending,
When a new sight met our view.

There before us stood the dial
Of the cumbrous, quaint old clock,
Fastened firm by iron stanchions
In its lofty bed of rock ;

And around it thickly clustered
Flies of every size and shape,
As they were its natural guardians,
Shielding it from wrath and rape.

“ Ah,” my friend said, “ Tempus fugit ; ”
And I looked up in surprise.

"Why," he queried, smiling gravely,
"Don't you see the clock and flies?"

"*Time* flies ! so they are," I answered ;
And 't was almost worth the pun.
Then we wandered slowly downward,
And the great clock tolled forth, one !

EPITAPHIC.

His tissues were lymphatic ;
His temperament phlegmatic ;
His mind epigrammatic ;
His manner most dogmatic ;
His heart was democratic ;
His tone aristocratic ;
His bearing plutocratic ;
His voice was most emphatic ;
His gestures quite dramatic ;
His tastes they were aquatic ;
His trouble was hepatic ;
His treatment hydropathic ;
His death was in an attic ;
His friends, although ecstatic,
Sent garlands emblematic,
And thought him most erratic !

THE MOUSE AND THE LADY.

A HOME EPISODE.

"A mouse ran up my lady's stocking,
And bit her knee, — oh, dear, how shocking!"

A JOLLY mouse, a social mouse,
Who else indeed would dare? —
Approaching softly, boldly crept
Beneath my neighbor's chair.

She, all unconscious, sewed upon
A pair of tattered hose,
Unmindful of marauder near
Her sacred woman's toes.

I quiet lolled in cosey chair,
Reading a rare old book;
When suddenly — a shriek, a jump,
The very rafters shook!

What happened then? What happened
there?

I cannot tell thee more.
But *something*, by a savage kick,
Was landed on the floor!

CONTRADICTIONS.

BEFORE.

"I HATE him!" savagely she cried;
"Why *don't* the man propose?"
For he was handsome, young, and rich,
A paragon of beaus.

AFTER.

"I love him," so she fondly said;
But to her heart she told,
"Oh, what a lucky match for me!
They say he's made of gold."

AFTER ALL.

But quickly did he find her out,
Which brought things to an end,
And then he simply jilted her,
And married — her best friend!

TWO KINDS OF TEA.

OH, the tea in Boston Harbor,
When a nation would be free,
Was thrown so quickly overboard,
Because 't was taxèd tea.

But the tea in Boston Harbor
Took deep root beneath the sea,
And came again to Boston town,
But this time as *Liber-ty* !

A PLAIN HINT.

HE needs a hint !
To-night he asked me for a flower,
 A wretched flower !
When, without stint,
If he had asked me — well, you know —
 In that same hour !

Next time, I vow,
I'll tell him that it is not right,
 Unless — unless —
He means — somehow —
That 's it ! I wonder if I dare ?
 Then I 'll say, yes !

ENVOY.

And she did dare ;
And being won,
When he was won,
They made a pair,
Yet were they one !

FLORA.

WE wandered in the moonlit lane,
Just she and I together,
And sweet the apple-blossoms' scent,
The perfume of the heather;
We looked into each other's eyes,
And felt 't would last forever.

We had no need of words to tell
Of what our hearts were thinking.
It was enough from love's full cup
We both were madly drinking;
And as we gazed up towards the skies,
We caught the bright stars winking.

And thus we sauntered slowly on,
She nestling close beside me,
Until I almost heard her heart, —
That heart she 'd ne'er denied me.
At length we reached her humble home,
Where love so oft would guide me.

Then on the sofa we sat down,
And wondered at each other ;
And each one thought, though naught was
said,
Could there be such another ?
But quick the door flew open wide,
And *there* stood — *not* her mother !

But some one with a bowl of milk,
Which soon was set before her,
When down she jumped, but gracefully,
My love, my beauty, Flora, —
For she was but my black-and-tan !
You see how I adore her.

ENIGMAS AND CHARADES.¹

I.

TAKE a word of cloth-yard fame,
Innocent of praise or blame ;
Speak it softly, and no woe
Echoes in your voice so low.
Then, but breathe upon it once,
Plain the change to every dunce ;
Speak it now with muttered breath,
And the sound breeds sin and death.
Thus, a fearful spell you wreak
Just by breathing while you speak ;
And a word, before so plain,
Now with horror thrills the brain.

II.

Two rivers and the end of man
My whole word form, — a wondrous plan ;

¹ For answers, see Table of Contents.

For ere it stands a perfect thing,
 Sad torture must its being wring.
 First, flayed alive it has to be,
 Its eyes torn out, its heart set free ;
 And after that, with ruthless zest
 You boil its carcass, all undrest.
 And sometimes, not content with that,
 You pound it fiercely till it 's flat ;
 And having thus your dire work wrought,
 You say a grace, and deem it naught.

III.

THREE very little words, — *if, for, and*
and, —
 In tongues, one modern, two of ancient
 use,
 Do make one English word, so-called,
 Though plainly culled its root from
 Spanish land.
 'T is thought by men much comfort to
 provoke ;
 But all its promise often ends in smoke.

IV.

My *first* I am and my *second*, too ;
For my *third*, my son would fully do ;
My *whole* is a thing you scarce could lose,
Which artists, doctors, dressmakers use.

No wife this riddle her husband must ask,
Lest the answer prove a difficult task.

V.

My *first* and *second* Dryden sings ;
A poet's name in echo rings,
And to my *whole* completeness brings.

THE END.



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